

# The Nation.

July 30/

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JUL 17

EDITORIAL

## LOUISIANA GOTHIC

With the Supreme Court ruling on parental consent in Minnesota and Ohio, and the multiple political orgasms of the Louisiana State Legislature, the abortion struggles have reached their roco stage. No one is dealing in realities; everything is meaningless elaboration. The boys of Baton Rouge were entirely consumed with the race, as they conceived it, for primacy in the campaign to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. The ludicrous series of votes and vetoes became a sporting event that utterly demeaned the seriousness of women's reproductive rights.

The court in the Minnesota case laid down rules for parental consent and judicial review based on social fantasies that have nothing to do with how thousands of teenage girls from dysfunctional families lead their lives today. ("Hmmm. Dad's dead drunk and Mom hasn't talked to me in a year. Guess I'll call Bill Kunstler and see if he can get me a hearing about an abortion. I'll look in the phone book. K-U-N. . .")

It's hardly worth exposing the illogic of the positions taken in such cases by the forced-pregnancy side. For the struggle—ever since *Roe*—has not really been about the logic of abortion law but about political rights. As the classic cold war wanes, reproductive freedom is one of the areas of personal autonomy that have come under increasing attack by the old enemies of the left. Artistic and sexual freedoms are obviously prime targets as well, as witness the move against the National Endowment for the Arts and the across-the-board assault on gay and racial minority culture.

What that implies is that the battle against those who would restrict freedom must be waged by a movement of all those under siege, and it has to be carried out on the political terrain, state by state, in galleries, schools and theaters, and surely in the streets.

**SAINT MITCH**  
Colman  
McCarthy

**BARRY AND THE  
BLACK PRESS**  
Paul Ruffins

**WHITE HOUSE  
DIARY**  
Douglas  
McGrath

**EUROPE'S  
RESURGENT  
RIGHT**  
Patrick Barnard

**RETURN TO  
SOUTH AFRICA**  
Craig Charney

**FRANCIS BACON**  
Arthur C. Danto

MY SUMMIT WITH VITALY

## A COUPLE OF GUYS TALKING ABOUT PEACE

*The following interview took place in Moscow on May 17 and was later broadcast on Studs Terkel's program on radio station WFMT in Chicago. Vitaly Korotich is editor of the weekly magazine Ogonyok, of which letters to the editor is the most popular feature. Soviet citizens in all walks of life freely express their views on a wide range of current issues. We have edited the original transcript for length and clarity.*

—The Editors

STUDS TERKEL

**VITALY KOROTICH:** Excuse my stupid English. And sit down. Or you want me to be there?

**STUDS TERKEL:** Come over here. We'll have a nice piece of cheese and some tomato and cucumber, a little Scotch and soda. Vitaly Korotich's wife, Zena, is preparing a meal for us, though I hope she'll join us in the conversation. I'm talking to someone whom I've known for eight years off and on, and of whom I've grown very fond. I've spoken to dozens of people living in Moscow—students, workers, others—and when they hear the name Vitaly Korotich, they break into a smile. He may be the single most popular person in the Soviet Union. He edits a paper, a journal, called *Ogonyok*, which roughly means small fires or small flame.

**VK:** You are a great man. I love you always as a symbol of American optimism, American vitality, and I like you because sometimes you are more optimistic than I am. It's interesting but in this country we still have censorship. We still have censorship, and from time

(Continued on Page 130)



## LETTERS.

## JACKSON/CUSTER '92?

Piermont, N.Y.

One might think that *The Nation* would be too gorged on humble pie after its prediction of an easy Sandinista victory to turn its sagacious eye back to the American political scene. But no, it blunders onward, chummily slinging its arm around the shoulder of the Democratic Party and counseling it to recognize Jesse Jackson as its salvation, while at the same time excoriating unnamed "neoliberal apparatchiks" for their absolutely justifiable fear that the nomination of Jackson would spell certain defeat for the party in 1992 ["Heading Off Jackson," April 2].

Without question, Jackson deserves a lot of credit for speaking out on many issues (the plight of the urban poor, gay rights, unionbusting, the inequities of the Reagan-Bush tax "cuts," U.S. relations with the Third World, etc.) that other Democratic politicians choose to ignore or gloss over. And he is, as *The Nation* points out, the hardest-working Democrat in the country. But the image of Jackson as some kind of electoral savior is pure fantasy, and a rather tired one at that. For years now, progressives have been clinging to a couple of dangerous myths about Jackson that really need to be debunked once and for all.

**Myth #1:** Jackson received a significant percentage of the white vote in 1988.

**Fact:** According to exit polls published in *The New York Times*, Jackson received 12 percent of the white vote during the 1988 primary season. Primary voters, as *The Nation* should know, are more ideological and committed than the general electorate. Thus, Jackson is getting only one out of every eight of the most progressive white Democratic voters. I hate to burst your bubble, but this is not exactly the backbone of a winning coalition. And it hardly seems likely that he'll be picking up the votes of disaffected Republicans in a general election, does it? This leads us to . . .

**Myth #2:** There is a huge pool of unregistered and disfranchised American voters out there that only Jackson can reach and that would be the natural cornerstone of a "new progressive coalition."

**Fact:** A post-election *New York Times*/CBS News poll determined that if nonvoters had voted in the 1988 presidential election, George Bush would have defeated Michael Dukakis by an even wider margin. To be more specific, Bush defeated Dukakis by eight percentage points among voters and by sixteen (50 to 34) percentage points among nonvoters. Thus, the nonvoters were even more "conservative" than the people who participated in the election. Do you really believe that people who rejected Dukakis in favor of Bush would choose Jackson over Bush?

Does *The Nation* bother to do any re-

search before it weighs in with its pompous pronouncements about "a new, truly democratic politics" (whatever that means) and its ill-considered electoral strategies for the Democratic Party? Or is it simply so sure of itself that reality is seen as an unnecessary inconvenience? How many times does Jackson have to lose before you get the message that he may be unelectable?

The Democratic Party's response to the Reagan-Bush era has indeed been gutless and unprincipled. But *The Nation's* solution—to turn to a candidate who has already been rejected twice by the voters in his own party, who has in fact never held elective office and who consistently generates (by a wide margin) the highest voter disapproval ratings—is hardly an enlightened alternative. One can only imagine whom you have in mind as a running mate for Jackson—George Armstrong Custer, perhaps? *Carl Brenner*

**Fact:** *White Democratic primary voters span the ideological spectrum from progressives in Vermont to conservatives in the South and vice versa; Brenner's assumption that Jackson drew the support of "only one out of every eight of the most progressive white Democratic voters" is wrong.*

**Fact:** *Post-election surveys always show a marked tilt toward the winner, so the claim that nonvoters would have given Bush a larger margin of victory is based on flawed data. More telling information can be drawn from Gallup's last pre-election survey. Among those registered voters who were unlikely to vote, 46 percent favored Bush, 42 percent liked Dukakis and 12 percent were undecided. That doesn't even account for unregistered voters. By contrast, those who said they were likely to vote favored Bush 53 to 42.*

—The Editors

## JAVA JIVE

Detroit

Surely you jest. *Twin Peaks* grounded in social realism? ["Twin Peaks, U.S.A.," June 11.] It's Peyton Place revisited, with an updated cast and computer-generated music. It's also completely unrealistic. No Northwest small town has ever produced a damn fine cup of coffee. *Esther K. Shapiro*

## LIBERIA OVERLOOKED

Washington

The ink on Michael T. Klare's June 18 article, "The U.S. Military Faces South," was hardly dry when the United States ordered a flotilla of ships to stand by off the coast of Liberia to "evacuate American citizens and other foreign nationals" should the need arise. Even though Klare did not mention Africa when he stated that "America's war machine of the 1990s will face south, across the Rio Grande, the Caribbean and the Medi-

terranean" (apparently referring to the Middle East), the first manifestation of Klare's postulation is Liberia. All the ingredients Klare suggested that would warrant U.S. intervention can be seen in the Liberian case: The situation in Liberia is an "armed insurgency"; it threatens "stability in the developing world"; it is an "internal conflict." Liberia has the potential of becoming a "hostile force in the Third World," and since the U.S. government has suggested it has evidence that Libya is one of the backers of the insurgents, American intervention cannot be ruled out.

Disappointingly, like the major news media in this country, *The Nation* considers Africa covered when events in South Africa and famine in Ethiopia are reported. *The Nation* has only recently mentioned Liberia [see David Corn, "Beltway Bandits," July 16/23], even though the present crisis has resulted in several thousand dead and hundreds of thousands fleeing for refuge in neighboring countries. More important, the U.S. role in the Liberian situation surpasses its involvement in any other conflict on the African continent. The Liberian regime has been sustained by the United States. At the time, between 1980 and 1987, Liberia was the recipient of the highest amount of U.S. aid in sub-Saharan Africa. Yet *The Nation* is tight-lipped. I wonder if *The Nation* would be as silent if events the magnitude of that in Liberia had occurred in Europe.

*Ezekiel P*

## DISROBING IN OBERLIN

Long Beach, Calif.

The Oberlin student in Edward Sorel's cartoon "Report From Oberlin" [June 2] that she and other graduates this year refused to wear caps and gowns to protest the high cost of tuition. Maybe they did Oberlin tradition of refusing to wear academic robes has a far more worthy origin: the early 1980s we believed graduates stopped wearing caps and gowns to protest the killing of students at J University. It was a small way things could not be the same. He commented that tradition is the first of the origins of a social practice. Oberlin students have infused and-gown tradition with new meaning. It would be sad if they—and we—lost our origins. The original meaning of Oberlin was far darker and far more in line with the times. *J*

## TROGS AND NEO-TROGS

Pittsburgh

After fifty years of coalition learning the bitter lessons of siveness, it is sad to see p  
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## EDITORIALS.

## Dooley Noted

“I see be th’ pa-apers,” said Mr. Dooley, the famous Chicago publican philosopher, “that Georgie Bush admits he’s goin’ to need enhanced revenoos to reduce the deficit.”

“Th’ conservatives in the Raypublican Party is down on him,” said Mr. Hennessey, taking a pull on his Guinness. “They’re not lookin’ forward to th’ fall illictions carryin’ th’ millstone o’ new thaxes ’round their nicks.”

“Sure and it won’t be the firrst time a President took back

a promise made in th’ heat o’ seduction iv the voters.”

“Th’ Dimmycratic Party will be gunnin’ for him come fall,” Hennessey remarked.

“And shoot themselves in th’ foot, if I know me Dimmycrats.”

“A lot o’ folk is sayin’ Bush knew full well when he promised not ta raise thaxes that he would have ta retract some day. They say he lied fer th’ sole purpose of getting illicted.”

“As I once observed, Hinnysy, ‘A lie with a purpose is wan o’ th’ worst kind an’ the mos’ profitable.’ But let us not rush to cast stones. As Georgie boy explained at his raycent press conference, conditions change. Whin he is runnin’ fer

ahffice a polytician is permitted ta lie. Whin he is servin' as Presydent he is a statesman and must deal with changin' conditions."

"And so he was bein' a statesman whin he vetoed the parental leave bill, which he said was such a foine thing durin' the campaign?"

"Of course, Hinnysy. 'Tis th' solemn Christian dooty of a statesman to curb th' excesses iv irresponsible polyticians who make wild promises on th' stump."

"He promised he'd fix up th' invoinment but at the summat in Hooston his boys said we should hold off on pollution controls."

"Only until we can foind some scientists who say carbon dioxide's good fer yer health, Hinnysy."

"An' he also tells the Eurpeans they shouldn't give any money ta th' Roossians unless they cut out dayfense spendin', stop sendin' Fidel's remittance checks and adopt th' capytalist system. I thaht he wuzn't goin' to interfere with th' Roossians."

"Th' Roossians is in th' throes of changin' into a glorious dimmycracy like ours, Hinnysy, and what they need most right now is lots of free advice."

"Ye seem to be sayin' that Bush is goin' to kayp on misleadin' th' Amerrikan public."

"Until conditions change, Hinnysy."

## Mitch Snyder

**M**isperceptions routinely engulfed Mitch Snyder, dead at 46 by his own noose. Because of his commitment to feeding and housing outcasts, admirers said that he worked tirelessly for the poor. He didn't. Snyder worked *with* the poor. He ate, slept and kept a daily presence at the three-story, blocklong, 1,200-bed building in Washington that he commandeered from federal slumlords in 1984 after a series of fasts, court suits and getting down to other nubs.

Snyder's protests against Caesar's imperial housing policies were organized by consensus with members of the Community for Creative Non-Violence, nearly all of them poor by choice or circumstance. He came to Washington in 1973, a drifter and ex-con who hung around C.C.N.V. and quickly found two of life's sustaining necessities: acceptance and a purpose. Over the years hundreds of others from similar fringes—loose-end transients, dropped-out college kids, homeless but not yet hopeless street people—would find their rocky way to C.C.N.V. and stay on as volunteers.

Detractors said that Snyder was a media manipulator. He wasn't. He had a grubbier calling: media gooser. Goosing the news media was necessary because in the mid-1970s homelessness was as much a nonissue as the homeless were nonpeople. Snyder papered newsrooms with press releases, worked the phones to reporters and editors and mastered the knack of the quickie quote.

Snyder proved bothersome to many in the news media because he couldn't be dismissed as another fame-hustler mongering for his fifteen seconds and also because he con-

sistently beat the press at the investigative work that it should have been doing: reporting on who and where the homeless were, what economic malevolences kept them that way and why the answer to the problem lay in justice, not charity.

However crabbedly he may have spoken to authority, Snyder was remarkably, almost heroically, nonjudgmental toward middle- and upper-class people who wanted to help but were morally clubfooted and didn't know how. Don't just come in from the suburbs with your Volvos packed with canned foods, he would say. Be to the people in the shelters as you are to the comfortable and well-off in your own neighborhoods, he advised. The true succor "is just to relax and be present to people, because that's what the people really need. That's the hardest thing to do."

In the 1980s Snyder took tea with Barbara Bush, had dinner with Jim Wright, persuaded members of Congress to hold hearings at the C.C.N.V. shelter and cajoled others to scrounge for food in back-alley dumpsters, built a shack city—Reaganville—in front of the White House, slept winters on heating grates, rallied developers to refurbish abandoned buildings, pushed food companies to give their surplus fruits and vegetables to soup kitchens, kept himself grounded in a life of prayer and patiently took a problem that was on the margin and put it on the agenda. It took about a decade of thankless doing, which was the glacial pace of civil rights progress when Martin Luther King Jr. was a jailbird and agitator.

I met Snyder in 1975. He exemplified Pascal's thought: Not to be mad is a form of madness. He often came to my home for dinner and conversation, and left his presence behind for our family debates on whether he was involved in prophecy or antics. I invited him regularly to speak to my college students in classes on nonviolence. The intellectually atrophied found him strident and abrasive and paid no heed to his evangelism. Other students—not yet in harness or yoke to convention—responded to his calls to service. More than a few ended up going off campus to volunteer at the soup kitchens and shelters in Washington's homeless belt. They became daughters and sons of Mitch's.

Snyder was spiritually grounded in the Gospel of St. Luke, where Christ the dissenter and troublemaker is depicted. In prison in the early 1970s, he was encouraged by fellow inmates Daniel and Philip Berrigan, priests of nonviolence and apocalyptic fury, to reflect on the fractiousness of Amos, Jesus, Gandhi, Dorothy Day and others of sharpened morality. He kept ties to that kind of religion, having little use for any other. And why would he? In 1976 Snyder wrote to more than 1,100 churches, synagogues and mosques in the Washington area to ask if they would offer space and comfort to homeless people. Only one wrote back saying yes.

On the Sunday after his death, clergy throughout Washington publicly prayed for Snyder. Pieties and lamentations choked the incensed air. A nuisance while he lived, the dearly and safely departed is now Saint Mitch.

COLMAN MCCARTHY

*Colman McCarthy is a syndicated columnist for The Washington Post.*

# Shady Customers

**I**n a new and ironic twist to the never-ending \$500 billion S&L industry bailout, the same unscrupulous real estate developers and high-flying financiers who built low-quality, see-through office buildings and unneeded condos across the country are now poised to buy foreclosed properties from the government at fire-sale prices.

The Resolution Trust Corporation "will inevitably get scammed," charges Stephen Pizzo, co-author of *Inside Job: The Looting of America's Savings and Loans*. "These very adroit con artists . . . are looking at the R.T.C. and saying, first of all, we created these real estate developments. Why not just go in [and buy them]?"

The average taxpayer, who is going to be soaked for several thousand dollars over the next forty years as a result of this deregulation fiasco, will be shocked but perhaps not surprised to discover that the federal bailout bureaucracy has no system in place to determine whether individuals seeking to purchase R.T.C. properties were responsible for creating substantial losses to taxpayers, or whether such buyers and their agents have been named in federal, state or local lawsuits as alleged white-collar criminals.

"We are concerned about this problem and will investigate this issue thoroughly in the near future," says Nancy Schertzing, public information officer of the R.T.C. in Washington. There are some simple steps that could be taken immediately by the R.T.C. Each of the country's ninety-four federal district courts has a computerized database of all people charged with federal crimes in its jurisdiction and all named parties in federal lawsuits. That information could be distributed to each of the bank districts to enable the R.T.C. to examine the record of prospective purchasers and their agents.

If the R.T.C. had had such a system in place, it might have refused to accept bids from individuals such as Joe Russo, a former owner of Ameriway Savings in Houston, which failed this year at a cost to taxpayers of an estimated \$173.4 million. This did not prevent him from bidding on a \$3.8 million four-acre tract, next to the Houstonian hotel complex, being sold by the R.T.C. for the failed United Savings Association. The Houstonian is President Bush's Houston home away from home, and Russo is the hotel's owner.

Press accounts failed to mention that Russo has been named in federal lawsuits seeking to recover damages from former owners of two Texas S&Ls—Lamar Savings and Sunbelt Savings of Dallas—which failed at a cost to taxpayers of some \$3 billion. Russo is named in those lawsuits as a co-conspirator who received more than \$60 million in loans from two high-flying S&Ls in return for helping them conceal their insolvency from federal regulators.

Another former high flyer trying to purchase R.T.C. properties is Charles Knapp, notorious for his role in the fall of the \$30 billion Financial Corporation of America, which operated American Savings in California. F.C.A.'s failure will cost taxpayers at least \$2 billion. According to Paul Muolo, co-author of *Inside Job*, in 1988 Knapp formed an

Austin-based company, Trafalgar Interests of Texas Inc., to help S&Ls sell their foreclosed real estate and to buy the foreclosed real estate from troubled S&Ls.

David Greenberg, president of Greenberg and Company in Houston, allegedly borrowed some \$44 million from banks and failed S&Ls in the area to finance real estate development projects, using false income projections based on lease contracts signed by prospective "tenants" who were really shell companies owned by Greenberg relatives and associates, according to Edmund Pankau, chair of Houston's Intertect Inc., a private investigation firm specializing in white-collar crime. "Now Greenberg is one of the players trying to acquire property of failed S&Ls from the R.T.C.," charges Pankau. In a telephone interview, Greenberg acknowledged that he is acting as agent for several "out-of-town investors" who are bidding on R.T.C. properties held by various failed S&Ls in Houston, that he has bought one shopping center from the R.T.C. and that he has a "hard commitment" to buy three more from the government.

Russo, Knapp and Greenberg are only three examples from two states. All across America, white-collar con artists with similar histories are waiting, ready to pounce on low-priced R.T.C. properties.

CURTIS LANG

*Curtis Lang, a freelance writer based in Houston, is at work on a book about the S&L debacle.*



## A BILINGUAL CONVERSATION (AFTER THE MEECH LAKE ACCORD FAILED TO PASS THE NEWFOUNDLAND AND MANITOBA PARLIAMENTS)

*"A pity! But I'm sure we all agree:*

*We'll wait two years, then make another plea."*

*"Finii."*

*"I know Meech Lake's defeat has caused a stir.*

*What can one say, except 'such things occur'?"*

*"À tout à l'heure."*

*"But most of us were pro — believe you me.*

*Why, just because the Newfies and one Cree*

*Have not allowed this noble pact to be*

*You can't intend to pack your bags and flee."*

*"Mais oui."*

*"And how about bilingual goals declared?*

*And how about the Anglophones who cared?*

*What say you to the history we've shared?"*

*"Merde."*

Calvin Trillin

# BEAT THE DEVIL.

## Look Whither, Angel? The Prospect From Houston

The capitalist powers, minus Japan, gathered first for the NATO meeting in London on July 6, there announced that the First and Second Worlds are "no longer adversaries" and duly reaffirmed their "intention to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state." Then the capitalist powers, Japan



included, descended to Houston to consider how much in the way of credits to give the Soviet Union and to indulge in the customary seasonal handwringing about the great motor of the 1980s boom, the U.S. deficit.

Houston is as good a place as any to locate a capitalist summit. Its own hyperbolic skyline startlingly records the glories of the 1960s and 1970s, while the graph of its real estate prices in the 1980s shows what happened when the sky turned dark and the bottom fell out of the oil market. Conditions have since improved in the oil patch but the Angel of Death is still on assignment and, though barely acknowledged, his shadow hung over the Houston summit. If the great motor of the 1980s was the U.S. deficit, the most active component of that deficit was military expenditure. But if the First and Second Worlds are no longer adversaries, how can arms spending, a stabilizing force in the U.S. economy since 1938, be justified on anything like its present scale?

On July 3 *The New York Times* ran an interesting report by Robert Reinhold, showing that God's messenger has been active in Greater Los Angeles and in San Diego County to the south. Aerospace and high technology employ about 420,000 people in Greater Los Angeles, or 7 percent of the region's jobholders. One-fifth of San Diego County's gross output depends on military procurement and salaries. McDonnell Douglas, the huge aerospace firm, plans to lay off 17,000 workers. Lockheed has already said it will lay off some 2,500 workers and move one of its operations to Georgia, meaning 4,500 cuts in the San Fernando Valley. Northrop, which is the prime contractor for the Stealth bomber (being assembled at the old Ford plant in Pico Rivera), plans to lay off some 2,700 of its workers.

Reinhold cites one computer model of California's economy as projecting a shortfall of 151,000 jobs and a \$7 billion drop in the gross state product from previously anticipated totals if U.S. military spending drops by 11.5 percent in 1992. In Los Angeles the consequences are already being reflected in housing prices, in housing starts (in April down 29 percent from last year) and in vacancy rates in commercial property. As in New York City, where the securities industry saw a loss of some 25,000 jobs in two years, the housing boom is over.

The one bright spot for the big contractors is the space program. Thousands of engineers, consultants, software designers, programmers, analysts, etc. are now trying to cram themselves down the funnel of the space budget ("Have you heard, it's in the stars, this July we procure for Mars"). What

else is there? The wives can go into real estate and the husbands can become Amway salesmen but it still all adds up to economic downturn.

## We Are the World: Injuries to All

For the large multinational firms whose representatives have been mustered in Houston the prospects are far more alluring. Under the sheltering sky of a world market and the open vista of free trade, the task is simply to roam the planet for cheaper labor. The idea of a social democratic Greater Europe stretching from Shannon Industrial Estate to the Urals, with a pan-German Social Democratic Party as its political heart and the U.S. Fortune 500 beating vainly at the tariff door, seems far too rosy.

Fortune's U.S. 500 is already, to a large extent, the World 500. Mergers involving Europe's thousand largest firms quadrupled over the past five years, with major U.S. participation. At present U.S. workers have declining wages, relatively low unemployment, low social services and declining unionization (heading toward 5 percent in the private sector). Workers in Europe, still highly unionized, have relatively stable wages, better social services and high unemployment. How long before the disciplines of the world market and the world firm compel the most attractive combination of all these traits in the form of low wages, low social services, no unionization and high unemployment, in Europe as elsewhere? Such are the consequences of free trade and free movement of capital.

It's a familiar story. In Watsonville, California, near where I live, the Green Giant frozen food plant recently laid off 300 of its 550 workers and moved its freezing operation to Irapuato, Mexico. Bulk shipments of frozen vegetables are then shipped from Mexico to a nonunion plant in Ohio and repacked. These decisions are ultimately traceable to Grand Metropolitan, the end owner based in London, which is under pressure to pay off the high costs incurred in its buyout of Pillsbury, which had previously swallowed Green Giant. Grand Metropolitan doesn't give a toss if Local 912 of the Teamsters pickets the Watsonville plant. It's no longer enough to say, "Think globally, act locally." For workers in the world market the slogan has to be, "An injury to one is an injury to all." Grand Metropolitan would give more of a toss if the Teamsters called on workers (of the world) to boycott another of its subsidiaries, Burger King, and to picket Grand Metropolitan corporate headquarters in London.

## The Epstein Interrogatory

While the world firms' elected officers in Houston dream of skilled low-cost labor beyond the Oder, a powerful current in the U.S. security establishment sees the seeming surrender of the Soviet Union as fake. Typically, a group like the right-wing International Security Council poses the question of "whether we are witnessing a tactical zig in Soviet policies intended to bolster the grand strategy of achieving global hegemony" and concludes that yes, Red Bruin is still on the ramp.

## ALEXANDER COCKBURN

In less comic-book terms the idiom is that of a paper by Edward Jay Epstein, now circulating through the security establishment. Epstein, a heterodox thinker with plenty of friends on right-wing circuits and a familiar of the late crazed C.I.A. counterintelligence chief James Angleton, recently formulated "110 Questions" about what the Soviet Union is up to. The questions are detailed in an Angletonian manner, implying, like the I.S.C., that Red Bruin has plenty of malign life left in his body. Take Question 26 in Epstein's interrogatory:

Soviet officials have informed US Soviet experts that they are shifting Soviet warheads around the USSR to avoid them being seized by dissidents, military factions or criminals. . . . Is the purpose of this brief: A) To focus Western attention on the possibility that nuclear weapons could be seized, and thereby lay the basis . . . for both the US and USSR installing passive locks on all nuclear warheads? B) To provide a plausible explanation for the redeployments of Soviet warheads this winter that may have been observed by US satellites? C) To project weakness? D) To tell the truth?

If A) Would passive locks on US sub-launched missiles increase the possibility of a successful Soviet decapitation strike? If so, are they in the interest of the US? If B) Is hiding weapons still a part of Soviet military doctrine? If so, does this movement present a problem for the US effort to track Soviet stockpiles?

The American security establishment has been asking this sort of thing ever since Gen. Jack D. Ripper equated the cold war with the state of his precious bodily fluids, and the traditional answer to this particular set of questions has been a Congressional appropriation for a new satellite system and hence assured employment for aerospace workers in Greater Los Angeles.

By the time he reaches Question 100, Epstein has demonstrated that the Soviet Union is probably not as militarily weak, industrially depleted and politically at sea as the Western press suggests, at which point he asks:

If the USSR remains at least a potential enemy, is the policy of aiding it to modernize and thus make more efficient its industrial and communications infrastructure justified by the theory: A) The economic modernization of the USSR will decrease its incentive to continue the super-power competition? B) The economic modernization of the USSR will lead to the democratization of the USSR, and democracies do not threaten other nations or compete with the US?

If A, Is there any historic basis for this theory? Would the same logic have applied to helping Germany modernize in the 1930s? If B, Would that not be an argument for aiding China—and all other totalitarian regimes—modernize? Moreover, some democracies, such as India, do conduct aggressive foreign policies?

The logic of Epstein's interrogatory is simple enough. The Soviet Union will be down only when it's out, and the benchmark for establishing when it is truly out can constantly be moved, against the hostage of credits and high-technology transfer. Out? But it still supports the Afghan regime! Out? But it helps support Cuba! Out? But it does not permit the

inheritance of wealth and hence the creation of a property-owning class . . . From such analyses as Epstein's comes U.S. resolve, as expressed in Houston, to tie credits to Gorbachev's saying goodbye to Cuba and installing capitalism before fiber-optic technology is made available. (As Epstein points out, a capitalist Soviet Union could still be a threat, perhaps a greater one. Keep those Tridents coming.)

Contrast the coherent intention and bracing counterrevolutionary conclusion of the Epstein interrogatory with the passive acquiescence of the liberal-left to the modes of change in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union projected in the corporate press. On this end of the spectrum there has been little interesting discussion of what the "reforms" are, or what they imply. *The Nation's* chief expert of choice on these matters, Stephen F. Cohen, has apparently been too busy advising CBS and President Bush to confide his opinion to *Nation* readers. *Workers Vanguard*, *Against the Current*, *In These Times* and *New Left Review* have run some spirited analyses. A couple of months ago the weekly *Guardian* ran a good provocative piece by James Petras asking some hard questions of the "anti-Stalinist left," which used to hold that it was only a matter of getting rid of the old Stalinist "bureaucracies" in Eastern Europe for true socialism to dawn, and which "committed itself to a condemnation of the totality of the experience during the Stalinist period, including economic, social, cultural and foreign policies." So what are those leftists saying now? How many of them are even prepared to contrast their hosannas to Polish Solidarity of only a few years ago with the reality that at least a large portion of Solidarity is today antiworker, anti-Semitic and tumbling toward Christian fascism under the urgings of Lech Walesa, the would-be Pilsudski who when he denounces a "leftist" actually means "Jew." Aside from some rather belated commentary here by Daniel Singer, one of the few interesting articles on such matters I can recall reading was in the March/April issue of *Tikkun*, by Tony Judt.

When I ventured some criticisms of Gorbachev's foreign policies in *The Nation* eighteen months ago I incurred a torrent of abuse from Howard Fast and others, reproaching me bitterly as a specter from the Stalinist graveyard daring to impugn the long-awaited socialist savior. So what are leftists like these saying now that the Soviet Union sat back with complaisance while the United States closed off Nicaragua's windpipe, or as officials in the Soviet policy establishment make their way to Miami to confer with Cuban émigré desperadoes, or as Soviet economic strategists hail the capitalist marketplace? As Petras put it, these leftists have basically surrendered the field to the neoliberals, who "conveniently bracketed police-state controls over intellectuals with full employment policies, food subsidies with bureaucratic commandism, national industrial policies with state mismanagement." So where now is the realistic, internationalist interrogatory of the left?



# MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

**W**hen Dr. Johnson had completed his great lexicography of the English language, he was congratulated on all sides. One piece of approbation came to him from two elderly ladies, who praised the good doctor for not including any indecent words. He floored them by replying, in effect, that he was amused to see that they had been looking them up, and that they knew what to look for.

This has always been the essential absurdity of "moral," as opposed to "political," censorship: If the stuff does indeed have a tendency to deprave and corrupt, why then the most depraved and corrupt person must be the censor who keeps a vigilant eye upon it. This irony, if it is an irony, is wasted on Pat Buchanan and the Parents' Music Resource Center, who spend all their time contemplating *Piss Christ* and striving to decode 2 Live Crew.

But the cultural liberals are hypocrites too. When *The Washington Post* loftily defended Robert Mapplethorpe's work as artistically valid and beautiful, Pat Buchanan rather mordantly asked why, in that case, did Kay Graham and Ben Bradlee not print the photographs in their great journal of record? A fair point, especially given the limited access of the public to the exhibition. Similarly, in all the driveling and fulmination about 2 Live Crew's *As Nasty as They Wanna Be*, only two outfits have done us the courtesy of printing the lyrics, and those two outfits are the *Washington City Paper*, a fine free sheet, and (as perhaps you guessed) Tipper Gore's Parents' Music Resource Center. Herewith, then, as a beach-time service to readers who want to make up their own minds, is a close textual analysis of Luther Campbell's muscular poesy.

Let us begin with "Me So Horny," which has had Campbell arrested and his album seized by officious sheriffs in Broward County, Florida:

Girls always askin' why I fuck so much  
Just say what's wrong, baby doll, with a quick nut  
'Cause you're the one and you shouldn't be mad  
I won't tell your momma if you don't tell your dad  
I know he'll be disgusted when he sees your pussy busted  
Won't your momma be so mad if she knew I got that ass  
I'm a freak in heat, a dog without warning  
My appetite is sex 'cause me so horny.

Here we have the pains and joys of adolescence, rather understated if anything; note the moan for help in the closing bars. In "Dick Almighty" we come across a well-known pseudocure for this discontent—a boastful and mock-heroic claim about that most capricious of all organs:

Dick Almighty's of no surprise  
It'll fuck all the bitches all shapes and sizes  
She climb a mountain, even run da block  
Just to kiss the head of this big black cock  
He'll tear the pussy open 'cause it's satisfaction  
The bitch won't leave, it's fatal attraction.

You wish, big boy. But then, all boys do wish something like this at one time or another, if not the entire time, and it's nothing if not a fit subject for melody. The same self-satirizing

tone can be detected in the Crew's "Dirty Nursery Rhymes," which improvise on some old dreck:

Jack and Jill went up the hill to have a little fun  
Jack got mad, kicked Jill in the ass  
'Cause she couldn't make him cum.

I'm sorry but I think that's very funny. A little further from the mark:

Little Jack Horner sat in a corner  
A-fuckin' this cutie pie  
Stuck in his thumb, made the bitch cum  
Said, "Helluva nigger am I."

Eternal themes also recur in the audience participation number, which is innocuously titled "If You Believe in Having Sex":

All right, I want y'all to repeat after me say:  
"I'm gonna get some pussy!"  
(Men chant) "I'm gonna get some pussy!"  
... all right ladies, y'all ready to do this ladies?  
Say, "You ain't gettin' no pussy!"  
'Cause you ain't got no money!"

Most of the sentiment expressed in other songs, such as the evergreen "C'mon Baby," are extremely crude protests at the state of affairs that is represented in the foregoing, coupled with unimaginative and unalluring revenges for it. For example:

Let's get it going on, let's act a fool  
Listen and learn while I take you to school  
You say you don't fuck on the first date  
Then fuck you, bitch, I ain't gonna wait  
'Cause my dick is hard and my back is strong  
I'll find another bitch to get it on.

The juvenile urgency of this *oeuvre* means that there's a deliberate emphasis on a distressing human fact—the proximity of the sexual and the excretory organs. "She's always schemin' and hot like a demon/I thought I came in her mouth, but I was only peein'." These thoughts, too common and ineradicable to need First Amendment protection, rather let down the sprightliness of the rap and the felicity of the rhyme scheme.

On the album cover, the Crew thank Mom, Dad and God and add, "If you don't like the record, you can kiss our mother fuckin' ass." Precisely. It's obvious to this reviewer that the Crew should be let alone, and that their foulmouthed attitude toward the gentler sex is a good-sounding excuse for a youth-hating and surreptitiously bigoted prosecution. I don't know the private thoughts of Sheriff Nick Navarro of Broward County, but I doubt they are worth a rat's behind and see no reason why he should sublimate his own vagina-dreading disorders in this expensive and undemocratic fashion. The same applies to the preposterous Judge José Gonzalez Jr., who in ruling on Sheriff Navarro's raid opined that the music appeals to "the loins, not to the intellect." In fact, I think they are a pair of racist shithheads who should be told to fuck right off.

## ARTICLES.

## ■ WASHINGTON'S BLACK PRESS

Rallying 'Round  
Mayor Barry

PAUL RUFFINS

Washington Mayor Marion Barry's trial on fourteen counts of cocaine possession and perjury turned out to be one of the news media's bloodiest feeding frenzies since Watergate. There was everything reporters could possibly want to sink their teeth into. On Barry's side there were drugs, sex, lies and videotape. On the government side there were pimping, entrapment and prosecutorial misconduct. With the mainstream media mired in racism and hype, Washington's black press had a great opportunity to bring to its audience the tragedy of how a once progressive activist had been so corrupted by power, blinded by hubris and disoriented by drugs that he gave his sworn enemies more than enough rope to hang him.

Most important, in addition to breaking a complex, multi-dimensional story, the black media could have helped reform a corrupt bureaucracy and aided the community in setting new standards of accountability for its leadership. Unfortunately most of the city's black newspapers did no such thing. Instead, most engaged in reactive skin-color nationalism and virtually ignored Barry's failings in favor of concentrating their fire almost entirely on the racism of whites.

Now, the Barry case obviously involves many real injustices. The media coverage of his arrest was clearly out of bounds. Reporters surrounded his home and later interviewed the boyfriend of Karen Johnson, a former Barry mistress who had in 1988 published details of their sexual relationship in *Regardie's*, a local magazine. Subsequently Bill Lawlor, the assistant news director of WUSA TV, admitted that his station had gone overboard by showing an artist's sketch of the Mayor that seemed like something out of *Amos 'n' Andy* and by airing clips of the Mayor's young son trying to escape news cameras by running to a car with a coat over his head.

But according to LaVerne Gill, publisher of *The Metro Chronicle*, the larger issue in the media coverage is the complete hypocrisy involved. "The white media is pumping up the fact that Barry smoked crack but has virtually ignored the fact that Bush, the Reagan Administration and Oliver North all knew the *contras* were smuggling millions of dollars worth of cocaine."

There is also clearly some racism involved in the federal prosecution of Barry. Like Nixon before him, Bush made

cleaning up Washington an important part of his effort to show that his Administration was getting tough on crime. To nail Barry, Republican-appointed U.S. Attorney Jay Stephens made use of crack, alcohol and a former model to entice him into possessing a misdemeanor amount of cocaine. *The Capital Spotlight* reported that while Stephens was busy pursuing Barry on drug possession and perjury charges, between January 1988 and March 1990 his office was forced to dismiss first-degree murder charges against sixty-two defendants because they hadn't been indicted within the proper period of time. Thus there were two evils, but rather than rising to the challenge of exposing both of them, the black press took the easy route.

The May 7 issue of *The New Republic* carried an article called "Barry's Free Ride," which pointed out that the timidity of the city's black elected officials in criticizing the Mayor had been "more than matched by the city's three black weeklies, which have been unanimous in their defense of Barry, telling their readers in article after article that he was 'set up' by racist whites."

Since Washington has at least six black weeklies, this statement by *The New Republic*, like many of the white press's observations of the black community, was at best a half-truth. But the part that was true illustrated why Washington needs a more vigorously critical black press than it has now. Only a week before the beginning of Barry's trial the *Washington Afro-American* and the *Washington Tribune* ran a front-page story titled "Va. Official Says: Barry Can Still Win," with the last four words in headline-size type. The Virginia official was Richmond City Council member Henry (Chuck) Richardson, who himself has been



Paul Ruffins is senior editor of Black Networking News, a Washington, D.C., monthly that has been critical of Mayor Barry.

re-elected twice since being arrested for possession of heroin and cocaine in 1987. At the time, Richardson confessed to a seventeen-year heroin habit and pleaded guilty to a lesser charge. Since then he has made his drug tests available to the public, and these have shown him to be clean.

Similarly, Barry's political career may survive this crisis in the long run. Many residents still remember that his first term brought the District of Columbia a dose of black pride that helped shake off the colonial mentality fostered by years of white politicians running D.C. as a personal fiefdom. Others note that under Barry the District enacted bold and progressive policies on AIDS testing, gay rights, abortion and the homeless.

But in examining the role of the black press in the Barry affair it's important to understand why the *Afro-American* elevated an opinion by an obscure Richmond official to a front-page story, providing great comfort to a Mayor under siege. The *Afro-American* and *The Capital Spotlight*, two of the District's most established black papers, along with *The Metro Chronicle*, a newer publication, have all actively defended the Mayor because they feel he is the victim of a plot to undermine black leadership. At a June 6 forum at Howard University, representatives from these papers blasted the racism of the federal prosecutor, the white media in general and *The Washington Post* in particular. While they did not deny that Barry had smoked crack, they glossed over the hypocrisy of a drug addict running a drug war and declared that *The Washington Post* and Jay Stephens were the truly guilty ones.

At a March 5 forum sponsored by the Capital Press Club, an organization of black journalists, Frances Murphy, the publisher of the *Afro-American*, freely admitted, "Yes, we bend over backward to give Barry the benefit of the doubt because so many others are bending the other way."

Every paper has a right to its own opinions and biases, and this is particularly true of the black press, which has always been an advocacy press. "I'm a nationalist and I just don't accept the idea that I should be bound by the same

editorial standards as *The Washington Post*," said *Capital Spotlight* editor Barry Murray.

But even an advocacy press should do more than foster a cult of personality. Since the Mayor's arrest on January 18 the *Afro-American* has run the following headlines: "He's Still the Mayor" and "Barry: Back, Brave, Better." Stories in *The Capital Spotlight* have also been so pro-Barry that they were reprinted in his campaign tabloid, *The Friday Report*, before he decided not to run for re-election.

These papers aren't just bending over backward to give the Mayor the benefit of the doubt; they've become the front line of his defense team. And while the publishers of two of the District's smaller black weeklies, *The Washington New Observer* and *American Weekly*, haven't been as actively involved in defending Barry, both agree that the black press has an obligation to support him. Finally, while D.C.'s largest black paper, *The Washington Informer*, has not cheered Barry, until the infamous tape of Barry smoking crack at the Vista Hotel with Rasheeda Moore was broadcast it had criticized him only in mild terms.

It's possible that these papers are forced to support Barry because they are dependent on city-government advertising. But the truth is that their almost blind support is motivated less by economics than by a bourgeois black nationalism that refuses to engage in critical analysis of black leadership. Given the substantial racism on the part of the mainstream media and the prosecution in the Barry case, there may be an argument for solidarity with the Mayor against a common enemy. But D.C.'s black papers were just as unwilling to criticize George Stallings, the black priest who founded his own Afro-American Catholic congregation. When *The Washington Post* published detailed accusations that Stallings had had sex with underage boys from his congregation and embezzled church funds, the black papers didn't confront him. In fact, after Stallings paid a visit to the *Afro-American* it printed a supportive story under the headline, "Stallings: Working Out My Salvation."

These papers' reluctance to challenge Barry's drug taking or Stallings's sexual behavior can't be attributed to their espousing libertarian positions on sex and drugs. According to George Wilson, a syndicated columnist who appears in a number of black papers, "The unwillingness of these papers to criticize any black person in a position of power can go so far as to be completely contradictory. For example, almost every black paper in D.C. supported federal Judge Alcee Hastings when he was being impeached in Congress. But even though they were totally convinced that he was being railroaded, I can't think of one black paper that criticized the members of the Congressional Black Caucus for letting Hastings be thrown to the wolves."

It's bad enough that they have refused to chastise Barry for his sins, but the black publishers have also fostered a climate of opinion in the black community that's hostile to black reporters who do criticize the Mayor. Just as some ghetto youths have convinced their peers that studying is "acting white," the black publishers are creating an atmosphere in which criticizing black leaders is considered white. Isaiah Poole, a black reporter who covered City Hall

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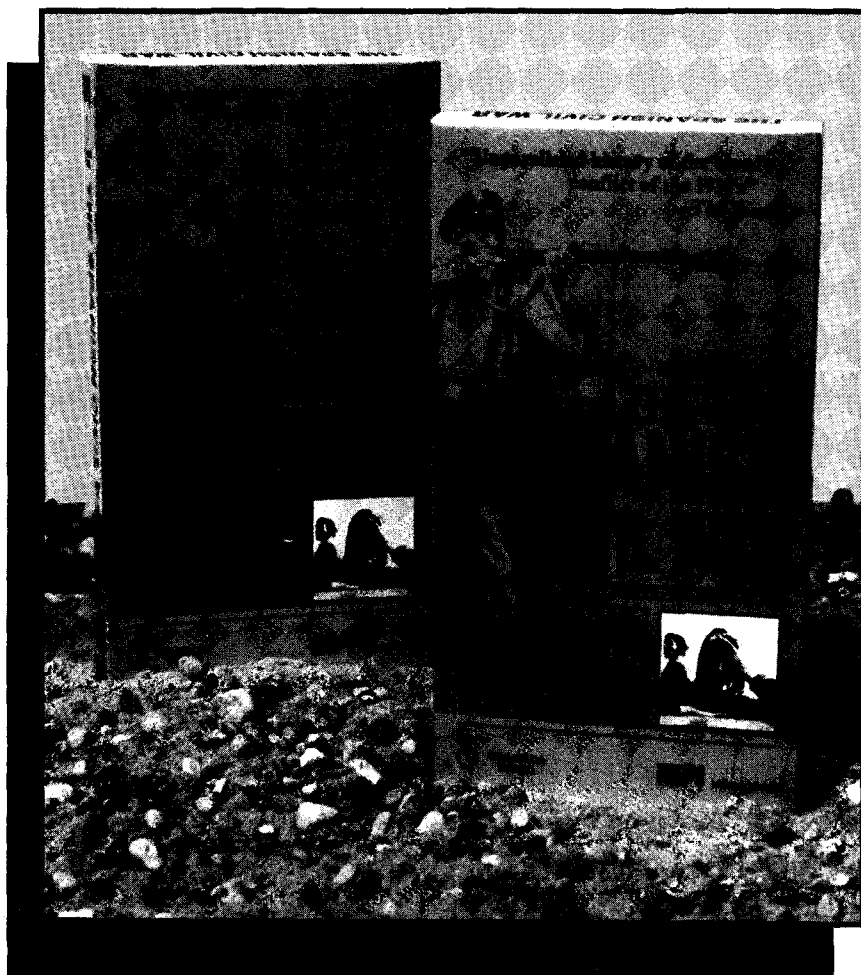
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for *The Washington Times*, has felt this pressure for self-censorship. "It comes out when you're out there in the community highlighting problems and somebody's taking potshots at you saying, 'Don't say that the emperor is naked.' It has created a very serious misunderstanding about what a critical, thinking person should be doing when reporting on black politicians."

David Nicholson of *The Washington Post Book World* believes that "the censorship really comes in being afraid to talk about issues of grave importance to black people, such as morality, duty and responsibility to the community." Nicholson adds, "The problem with those who still espouse a cultural nationalism that doesn't include a critical element isn't only that they want black reporters to censor themselves but that they insist on looking at the internal workings of the black community as if everything were O.K. Well, if they really loved Marion Barry they would have acted like a real family and told him about his faults before he self-destructed."

But the anger at the pressures for self-censorship isn't limited to African-Americans who work for the white media. Many of the District's black independent writers and intellectuals are also outraged. "These papers are offshoots of the black business community, which is generally made up of middle-class race men concerned with putting the best face forward," explains Ethelbert Miller, head of Howard University's Afro-American Resource Center. "The black middle class becomes very nationalistic in a time of crisis. But we need a critical press. When we ask who owns these papers we usually find that they're very conservative except on the issue of race. They're certainly not socialists and few can get past the politics of personality. These people are so embarrassed by Barry looking bad to whites that they slow the development of criticism and dialogue within the community. If you're a black reporter who begins to be critical, your publisher may get a phone call and decide to kill the story. But if you take it to a white paper and print the same thing you become a Judas."

Grigsby Hubbard, a D.C.-area activist and poet, goes even further: "The big lie is staying away from the idea that Marion Barry sold out any progressive agenda and is the enemy of the same grass-roots people who are rallying to his support. Barry cut a deal to enrich certain bankers and developers. The middle class appreciated his program to paint the face of government black, but absent a real analysis and personal integrity, he couldn't come up with a program to empower the District's poor and working-class black folks."

Hubbard maintains that "the kind of nationalism we're seeing has healthy roots but it just can't be countenanced in journalists. Its roots are in the masses' understanding that the government is not about playing fair and is out to undercut the progress of black people. But this body of unfocused sentiment is not the same as the informed critical analysis we expect thinkers to provide. Right now Marion's agenda is to cut his losses, and the black press should not help him to wrap himself in the mantle of the people's sentiment to escape the fact that he has sold them out." □

## ■ WHITE HOUSE DIARY

# Prez V. Uptight Re: Tax Thing

DOUGLAS MCGRATH

**A**pr. 9: Prez, Sunu and I met with Teet to go over the polls. Prez now at 74% approval. "Only 26 more to go till a hundred!" Prez said cheerfully. Prez has gone up an average of 3 points every 7 weeks. If this continues, Prez will hit 100% on May 17, 1991. Prez obsessed with being first Prez ever to be approved of by everyone polled. Prez: "And people say I don't have a vision!"

Flap continues re: EPA to Cabinet. Prez wants to elevate EPA because it gives impression we are doing something about Earth Day. Sunu supports idea as long as it doesn't actually raise President's commitment to environment. "Oh, gosh no!" Prez said, laughing. Even though Dar feels we didn't fight two world wars to make the world safe for green veggies, he supports this. Dar supports any idea that doesn't cost money.

Apr. 13: Dar wrote emergency paper on S&Ls. \$150 billion more than we expected, which is bad since to make our budget work we already expected about \$75 billion more than we told anybody. Prez v. disturbed reading report: "How could this many Sara Lees have May-dayed? And in all my strongest states! We've literally got to do something! It's very bad for this country when rich people lose their money. That's when they become Democrats!"

Rollins tried to calm Prez down. Reminded him of what Atwa always says: "It's a crisis only if we're blamed for it." Rollins suggested that all staff discuss crisis in terms of supply-side economics so that public will be too confused to find out whose fault it is. (Prob. is no one on staff understands supply-side economics.)

Re: other budget probs, Dar pushing for heavy cuts in Defense. Said there are no obvious threats to US anymore. Cheney said, What about the Russians? Dar said the R's aren't a threat—they've opened a McDonald's. Cheney said that makes them more dangerous. Now their troops can eat faster.

Dar pulled out a chart. It said, "Countries That Are Threats to US." It listed the usuals: Iran, Syria, Cuba, etc. The next column said, "Countries With McDonald's That Are Threats to US." There were none. (Webster said he thought Syria had a McDonald's. Gates said Syria had a hostage named McDonald, not a McDonald's.)

Sunu said right wing will not support big cuts in military. They will accuse Prez of being weak. Prez flinched. Immediately said everybody must come up w/5 new obvious threats to US security by next week. Whoever picks best threat will get night privileges on squash court.

Apr. 15: Prez to give Reilly's speech on global warming.

*Douglas McGrath is the author of the play The Big Day.*

Sunu is antispeech as Sunu doesn't believe in global warming. "I don't feel any warmer," he said. Told me to rewrite calling for more study. I pointed out this speech *is* the study. Sunu shrugged. "I didn't say call for *this* study."

*April 18:* Prez gave speech on global warming. Quite an accomp. since he never used the term. He called it "thermal progress" and "temperature betterment." Tried to stress the bright side: "There is less chance that you will freeze to death today than there was 10 years ago. The Bush team is closing that door on freezing to death with laserlike speed. Also, punch this into your computer: We expect a major decrease out there in people's complaints about how winter is too long."

*Apr. 23:* Prez signed antihate legislation. Prez to give out monthly award to "that American who hated the least last month." As Michael Jackson sang the antihate theme song ("I Hate Hate"), Prez snuck back from Rose Garden to check how popular he was. Teet had a 76% for Prez at 10:30, but by 11:00, it was back to 74. Sunu thought this just meant people didn't like their lunch, but Prez frantic: "We've been at 74 for 9 days! We're getting stuck!" Prez canceled 1:30 meeting re: possible Soviet invasion of Lithuania to figure out how to get to 100. Ordered Teet to activate Operation Popularity.

Q. said, "If you want to be popular, you should tell the country you've got a pool. Back in Indiana I had a pool and it made me real popular. The guys in the National Guard loved it! We were there all the time. In fact whenever people bring up Vietnam and talk about flashbacks, I always think back to that pool."

Teet went over Prez's most popular actions to see if there's anything we could do again. Most popular was Panama, but everyone agreed it's too early to re-invade Panama. 2nd most pop. thing (and Dar's personal favorite) was, as Prez calls it, "the me-hating-broccoli thing." So as first step of Op.-Pop., Prez will speak out against liver. If anyone fights him on it, we will run 30-second spots against them in fall.

*Apr. 25:* At Threat Fabrication Meeting, Thorny had this idea: Nory escapes from prison. CIA drives him to airport, re-arms him and helps him overthrow Endara so we can drum up hysteria for big mil. budget. Prez liked idea because it means fighting for democracy. Dar liked idea because he said fighting for democracy is cheaper than running a democracy.

New S&L numbers. Biggest fiscal crisis in US history. Dar said unless serious steps are taken pre-Prez re-election, recession v. likely. Prez in a panic: "Is the public going to feel so fantastically anti-me that they'll Herbert Hoover me at the end of my first T?" Dar told Prez the time had come to raise taxes. Prez said fine, we're always raising taxes. Dar shook his head. "This time we'll have to *call* it a tax." Prez blanched. "No more 'national parks surcharge'? No more 'dog license levies'?" Whole thing so unnerved Prez that when he got back from Mrs. B.'s Bowling for Literacy tournament, he forgot to check how popular he was. Said, "New T's give me the yips!"

*Apr. 28:* Right wingers think Prez is too quiet re: Lith. If they could only be here, they would know he is not being

quiet about Lith. He sat at his desk for hours yesterday, looking at Gorb's picture and saying, "Please don't do anything to Lithuania! *Please!*"

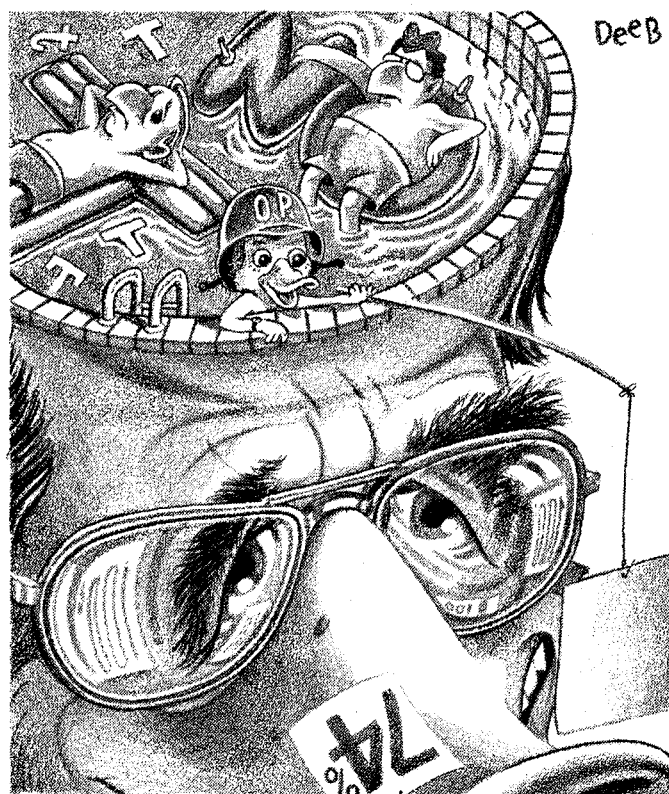
*May 4:* Added an additional Daily Secret Meeting to the schedule. It will precede the Regular Daily Secret Meeting by an hour. The new secret meeting will allow us to keep secrets from the people at the Regular Secret Meeting. It will be ref'd to as Private Regular Daily Secret Meeting.

S&L bailout now \$50 bil. higher. Prez coming to terms with a tax called a tax. But said, "If taxes must be raised, let's be responsible about it. Let's get those Democrats out there to do it. I don't mind breaking my promise so long as people see me as a man of my word." Will call a budget summit to give Dems their chance.

*May 8:* Gorb has sent tanks to Lith. Prez worried that this will ruin summit: "Have they fired? Is there any crushing of people going on?" Luckily, tanks just drove up and down the streets. Prez v. relieved and released this statement: "The United States will not intervene in the traffic disputes of another nation."

*May 11:* Prez gave liver address. Said "liver is a disgrace to meat." V. moving passage on time Prez pretended to faint so he wouldn't have to eat it. Numbers up 3%.

Reilly came to complain about global warming speech. Sunu wouldn't let him see Prez. Sent him over to Q. instead. After Reilly listed the numerous inaccuracies in the speech and denounced the "feel-good approach to global warming, which puts us in a minority among those with any knowledge of the subject," Q. asked, "Do you think global warming happened because the cold war ended? Or did the cold war end because it was getting so warm? It's one or the other, I know that much." Reilly might be having second thoughts about trying to get into the Cabinet.



**May 16:** Ultraright still breathing down our neck on Lith., but Cong. under control. They tried to pass a resolution, then a nonbinding resolution. They finally settled on something called a "Nonbinding Congressional Suggestion." It reads: "President Bush: If there's anything you can do that would help the Lithuanians but wouldn't upset the old arms-control apple cart with the Soviet Union, we really hope you'll do it. Of course, you know best. Forget we brought it up."

Prez addressed anti-liver rally at the Reflecting Pool. Said, "I want to be positive about this. I am anti-liver but pro-life." Prob. this will be last step of Op.-Pop. Numbers flat, though Teet reports that Prez is now the most popular Prez ever with Americans under 10.

Budget summit going to hell. Dems furious at Sunu for saying they'd propose taxes and we'd reject them. Ultraright ready to go to war w/Prez for even considering taxes. Dick Viguerie said, "Abandoning Lithuania is one thing, but taxes! Where are your values?"

**May 21:** At budget meeting Dems told Prez they will propose no new taxes till he does. We'll see. Dems never seize an advantage when there's a disadvantage they can take just as easily. But if we have to propose a tax, Prez will suggest a broccoli tax. "This is the one new T that could help me get to a hundred!"

**June 6:** Budget summit at a standstill. Dems not giving us anything. No one even agrees on size of deficit—and this has been going on 3 weeks. Slight breakthrough today: We took a vote and everyone agrees there is a deficit.

Prez's numbers slipping. Summit *no* help. Over 40% polled said they didn't know Prez was present at the summit. 27% knew he'd been in town but thought he'd only driven Gorb around. (One bright spot: Of the 27%, a high 86% felt Prez was a good driver.) 31% still think he's Vice President. This is bad, but it does show improvement: Only 28% knew he was Vice President when he was Vice President. Everyone agrees that if this is all we can count on, we don't need any more summits.

**June 11:** Big break for us. Supreme Court declared flag protection law unconstitutional! Everyone thrilled. We can push for amendment for several weeks, milking it right up to fall elections. This'll get the Prez's numbers up and keep attention off the new taxes. Then after we pass it in Congress it will go to states and that'll take forever and Prez can barnstorm for it whenever he needs to break another campaign promise.

**June 21:** No one can believe it but House didn't pass Flag Amendment. Polls showed Americans feel more concerned about the S&L crisis and the deficit. Yikes. We met tonight. Prez will have to propose some new T's. Prez so mad he can't get Dems to do it, he went out to his horseshoe pit and burned a flag.

**June 29:** Everyone haywire over new T's. At p.-conf. today, Prez answered charge that he has now broken all his campaign promises. Prez said, "Look. George Bush is a man of his word. I know George Bush. *I am* George Bush. George Bush has kept his promises. Take that Willie Horton. I said that guy should not get out of jail for little trips

on the weekend, and I haven't let him out. And as long as George Bush is President, Willie Horton might as well cash in any theater tickets he's got 'cause he's not going anywhere. Promised it. Kept it."

Prez was all over the map in this p.-conf. "I promised no new taxes. And I'm sticking with it. The taxes the Bush team will propose aren't new. They've had taxes like these before. These are just enlarged old taxes."

Prez upset by outcry. This morning in prepping for p.-conf. he asked, "Can we check the record? Maybe I said I wouldn't *pay* any new taxes. I'd still be for that!"

**June 30:** Prez v. depressed. Said he hasn't been this down since he didn't make the Whiffenpoofs. "It's just I hate to break my trust with the American people."

Then he read some of Teet's numbers. "Hey, get a load of this. Over 63% of the public never believed I would keep my promise not to raise taxes in the first place. They *expected* me to do this!" Prez broke into a grin and jerked his head off to the side, the way he likes to do sometimes. "I really *have* honored their trust!" □

## ■ EUROPE'S RESURGENT RIGHT

# Does Tomorrow Belong to Them?

PATRICK BARNARD

**I**n the first half of 1990 Western newsrooms have produced a deluge of hectoring copy about the transformation of Eastern Europe. Commentators deliver daily lectures on the ultimate course of world history, the absolute decline of communism and socialism, the superiority of market economics and the necessary connection of democracy with capitalism. Meanwhile, the world financial system, which almost collapsed in 1987, appears impregnable. But ominous shadows loom over the new Europe.

Throughout the East, the market has become a kind of God. Mikhail Gorbachev's highest-level advisers—economists Nikolai Shmelyov, Nikolai Petrakov and Stanislav Shatalin—speak of the market as a kind of occult principle that will magically clean up the messiness of reality. At the end of March Shmelyov told the Moscow correspondent of the Italian daily *La Repubblica* that "the market will overcome chaos" and that only if Gorbachev commits all his presidential powers to installing a market system will the Soviet Union escape "revolt, dismemberment, and anarchy."

Petrakov, Gorbachev's personal economic adviser, warned in an interview with *Pravda* that the Soviet Union had created individuals with a "nonmarket psychology." Shatalin has also used the columns of *Pravda* to argue along the same lines, accusing skeptics of making the market system into a straw man characterized by "capitalist slavery"—an image,

*Patrick Barnard is a Canadian journalist based in the Netherlands.*

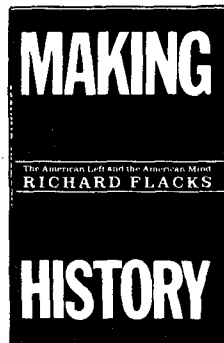
says Shatalin, that allows interest groups to sabotage economic *perestroika*.

This rhetoric, of course, forms part of the deep political struggle over Soviet economic policy [see Daniel Singer, "The Perils of *Perestroika*," July 2]. In fairness, the reformist technocrats are talking about a social market system, but nonetheless they paint an almost utopian picture of what the market entails: order, political stability, democracy, dynamism and responsibility. A similar vision is regularly invoked by technocrats throughout Eastern Europe. What happens, then, if the world experiences another deep global recession like that of the mid-1970s, or perhaps an even more serious downturn comparable to the Great Depression? What kind of disillusionment will millions feel in Eastern Europe if the new God of the Market fails, like the old God of the Party? Unhappily, Western triumphalism has meant that few politicians or journalists have talked publicly about the enormous dangers of the present situation. Almost no one will speak out loud about the new instability in the new Europe—no one, that is, except the far right.

And that is the second dark cloud hanging over the continent: the rise of the right in both Western and Eastern Europe. Organized neofascist parties peddle a politics ready-made for the economically disenchanted. In France and Germany the extreme right now exercises considerable influence on center-right groups, which in turn have been financing anti-Communist (and often anti-Semitic) politicians in Eastern Europe. The groundwork is in place for the pan-European right to spread like wildfire, given the proper economic conditions. The outburst of anti-Semitism in France in May, culminating in the desecration of the cemetery at Carpentras, was by no means an isolated case.

Signs of the times are everywhere. One of the groups that gained legal status in Romania after the overthrow of Nicolae Ceausescu last December was the old National Peasants Party. On a gray day last winter, Peter Hillmore of *The London Observer* paid a visit to N.P.P. spokesperson Valentin Gavrielescu at the party's Bucharest office. Gavrielescu began attacking Romania's Prime Minister, Petre Roman, who continued in that post after the May 20 elections. Roman is Jewish, the son of a man who was in the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War. He is what you might call a critical Marxist, with a deep attachment to France, where he was a student. "How can a Jew be a Romanian?" Gavrielescu asked Hillmore, who is himself a Jew. "To think that our Prime Minister is Jewish. It's a disgrace to the Revolution." Gavrielescu confided that these views could not be expressed openly, "although many Romanians support them," and that they had to be hidden at N.P.P. headquarters because U.S. reporters, "many of whom are Jews," were regular visitors there. Hillmore, on another occasion, found his Romanian translator reading the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the old czarist police forgery that accuses Jews of a conspiracy to take over the world. "It is quite certain," she told Hillmore, "that the Jews really do have a plan to dominate Europe."

Immediately before the first round of the Hungarian elections on March 25, Sandro Viola of *La Repubblica* inter-



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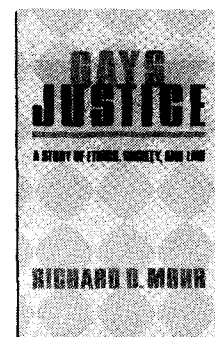
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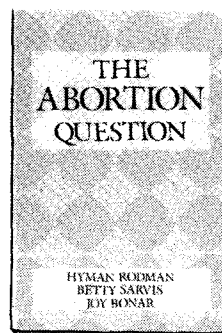
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viewed Zoltan Biro, a founder of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, now the country's ruling party. Forum followers had conducted an aggressive electoral campaign against their rivals, the Alliance of Free Democrats, that included anti-Semitic graffiti and accusations that the Free Democrats were led by Jews.

When Viola asked about the campaign, Biro denied all charges of anti-Jewish ideology in the Forum, but told the Italian:

It seems to me that they [the Free Democrats] should be more cautious. Because the leadership of the Free Democrats is formed of Jews for the most part, which is not without significance in this country. And the men of 1919, of the Soviet Republic [in Hungary]—from Béla Kun to Lukács—were Jews. And so, too, were the Communist leaders of '48, from Rákosi to Ger to Rajk. So that this produces an enormous number of brutal recollections in people, the memory of two national disasters.

The references here are highly calculated. Laszlo Rajk was a Hungarian Communist, a man who fought in the International Brigades and then became, briefly, Interior Minister in Hungary in 1948-49. In that year he was convicted in a Stalinist purge trial and executed. More important, his son is a leader of the Free Democrats.

Biro clearly thinks Jews—aliens—imposed Communism on the nation, not once but twice. Similarly, a doctor and Forum member in the town of Debrecen, interviewed by Mark Frankland of the *Observer*, expressed relief at the Forum's second-round victory because Hungary had survived "the third Jewish attempt to seize power in this century." His comments were a clear echo of the campaign rhetoric that focused on a Jewish conspiracy.

These are primitive accounts that explain Hungarian

Communism as the result of the Hungarian people having been possessed. They serve, also, to exonerate a crucified but now resurrected nation: a motif that also crops up frequently in the rhetoric of the Pamyat movement in the Soviet Union, which cites Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev and a number of other Jews as being the "brains" behind Bolshevism.

The Hungarian Forum has received significant support from three Western political groups: the U.S. National Republican Institute, Jacques Chirac's Rally for the Republic (R.P.R.) in France and the Christian Democrats in the Federal Republic of Germany. During the pre-electoral period, Jozsef Antall, now Hungary's Prime Minister, unashamedly drove around in a Volkswagen Golf given to him by West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

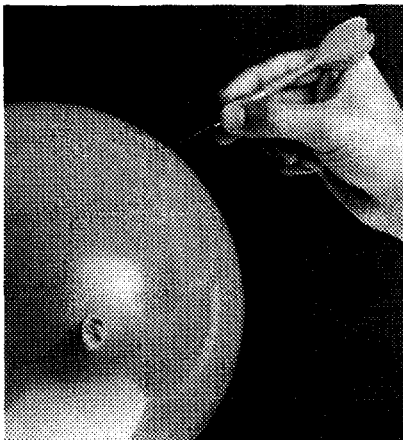
The anti-Semitic discourse of Budapest cafes also found its way back into the public language of Western Europe. In the March 27 edition of the Paris daily *Le Monde*, a reporter named Sophie Shihab explained the electoral appeal of a party called the Federation of Young Democrats. According to Shihab, the group attracted "those who found the Democratic Forum too conservative, or too nationalist, its great rival the Free Democrats too elitist or '*too dominated by Jews.*'" The italics and quotation marks were obviously meant to distance the reporter from the slur, yet it was striking to see how casually it slipped onto the front page of one of Europe's great newspapers.

Although right-wing sentiment is most apparent in Eastern Europe, the shifts occurring in France and West Germany may be more dangerous. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing has associated himself with the anti-immigrant policies of the racist National Front (F.N.), and if his Union for French Democracy and Chirac's R.P.R. do well electorally, the message will be that neofascist attitudes pay political dividends. In Germany this winter Helmut Kohl shamelessly and successfully used the "lost lands" rhetoric of the neo-Nazi Republican Party by refusing to acknowledge Poland's western border along the Oder-Neisse Line. Kohl also resorted to language reminiscent of both Bismarck and Hitler: On March 17, the day before the East German elections, Kohl cried out to an East German crowd, "*Ein Volk! Ein Land!*" ("One people! One land!"). The slogan, equating territory with race, revived memories of the Hitlerian demand that all German-speaking people be incorporated within a single Reich, as well as the famous Hitler slogan, "*Ein Volk! Ein Reich! Ein Führer!*" Kohl later reversed himself on the frontier issue.

In February and March, however, French anxiety about Kohl's behavior badly soured French-German relations. "La Lettre du Quai," the confidential, in-house newsletter of the French diplomatic service, solicited an article by German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher that was to contradict Kohl's position on European frontiers. French diplomats said the West German coalition government was divided, with Kohl's people speaking a language full of very old German attitudes. France's Socialist President, François Mitterrand, has a number of close advisers who are Jewish, notably National Assembly President Laurent Fabius and



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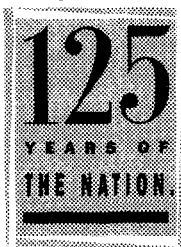
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Jacques Attali, head of the new Bank for European Reconstruction and Development. In its March 14 issue, the Paris investigative weekly, *Le Canard Enchaîné*, reported that one of Kohl's closest advisers, questioned by reporters in London, had commented that French-German relations "aren't very good," complaining that "there are too many Jews around Mitterrand."

The story reveals a great deal about prevailing attitudes in the upper echelons of the Christian Democratic establishment: Troublesome, alien Jews have got between Mitterrand and Kohl, two true Europeans prevented from feeling their natural racial solidarity.

The prospect of anything like a fascist Europe centered around a French-German entente no doubt seems extremely remote. Nonetheless, the gradualist strategy of the F.N.—win power locally and regionally, govern where possible in coalition with center-right parties, all in preparation for France's next presidential elections—bore fruit earlier this year in France's fifth-largest city, Nice.

When the F.N. opened its eighth congress in Nice on March 30 the Mayor of Nice, Jacques Médecin, gave F.N. leader Jean-Marie Le Pen the keys to the city. Various right-wing fanatics from around the world were in attendance at the congress, but the star foreign attraction was Franz Schönhuber, corporal in the Waffen S.S. during World War II and currently head of the West German Republicans. Schönhuber was greeted with a huge ovation; sitting in the front row of the audience were seven F.N. members of the Nice City Council. A week earlier, on March 22, Médecin had brought those seven into what he called his "enlarged majority" on the City Council, adding their votes to his center-right coalition. Three Jewish council members—André Sfar, Harry Levy and Jill-Patrice Cassuto—protested to Médecin, only to be told, "In Nice the Jews vote for the Left by a percentage of 75 percent and you represent 4 percent of my electorate, while the National Front represents between 20 percent and 25 percent. . . . I'm going to give them administrative posts if they vote for the budget."

On April 2, after the presentation of the city keys to Le Pen, Sfar, Levy and Cassuto resigned in protest. In a TV interview the next day, Médecin justified his acceptance of F.N. support, saying: "I've never known a Jew who'd refuse a gift that was given him, even if the gift didn't please him. And for my part, I haven't known of a mayor that would say . . . 'I refuse votes that are offered to me.'" Eventually, at the end of June, Médecin loyalists assumed the vacant council posts and the F.N. went back into opposition.

True, Nice is just one rich, pretentious French city, and Médecin himself, who is in trouble with the law and may not run again, is something of a special case. But the events there showed how much influence the extreme right could have at the local level.

Clearly Europe is at a great historical turning point, a moment similar to 1914, when the Austro-Hungarian Empire began to collapse, or to the post-Napoleonic period that eventually led to the revolutions of 1848. We enter the new dispensation under the dual signs of Gorbachev's internationalism and a malignant anticommunism, and for the time being no

democratic alternative to the present capitalist order appears to fire the hearts of ordinary men and women. The signs of right-wing disenchantment, however, are much in evidence, and any serious economic deterioration in Europe would supply the soil that bad seeds need to germinate. □

## Couple of Guys

(Continued From Front Cover)

to time the censor arrests one or two articles in my magazine. Also, I still have internal censorship. A small marble Stalin is sitting inside me, somewhere in my stomach, and all the time he's telling me, "Shut up, boy, or I'll come back." It's better, it's easier without censorship, but we are still pushing ahead. And I'm happy to do it because I have no choice—it's my way. Tomorrow I'll appear before a special commission of our Parliament, who want to discuss my behavior, because I publish a lot of articles against the Soviet military-industrial complex.

**ST:** Imagine this happening to an editor in the United States. Vitaly says he's being called before generals of the army, no doubt to be bawled out or warned for articles he's done criticizing the army.

**VK:** I don't know about the United States but here generals want to do what they're doing without control. Now they are building three big aircraft carriers for our navy costing more than 60 billion rubles, and I think that in the army we have now more than 200,000 officers who are homeless. They are living nobody knows where. If we built two aircraft carriers, not three, I'd have apartments for all of these officers. As a deputy I announce this. And the generals start to receive letters from these officers. [Phone rings.] And now I have a phone call, maybe from one of the generals. Like all generals, they are outside the law, and when you start to criticize them they tell you that you're unpatriotic. So then I asked them a terrible question—try to ask this question to your American generals—Who wants to attack the Soviet Union? Who is this idiot who wants a half-destroyed country without a real economy? And they will tell you that patriots must defend their country and you must pay for your army. I think now in America and in my country, our generals are the most unhappy part of our societies. Because they need an enemy to have so many weapons. I have an impression that sometimes our generals and your generals understand each other better than so-called liberals. At the Vienna disarmament talks the Soviet military delegation say they want the foreign ministry delegation to go out of the room and leave them with the American generals because they want to talk between specialists. For Soviet generals, American generals are closer than even Soviet foreign ministry people.

**ST:** You've just hit something very important: These guys need each other—for a cold war or hot war—they love each other because that creates their jobs.

*Studs Terkel is working on a book about people's thoughts on race. He is author of Working, Hard Times, The Good War (all published by Pantheon) and other oral histories.*

**VK:** Of course. And they take our money to buy their stupid cruisers and planes.

**ST:** So the Soviet military big boys and the Americans need each other just as the K.G.B. needs the C.I.A. and the C.I.A. needs the K.G.B.

**VK:** Of course, of course.

**ST:** Because if we didn't have this cold war these bums would have to look for honest work.

**VK:** Once I was at a big reception in the Soviet Embassy and the K.G.B. people—everybody knows them—collected together at the same table. Then the guests from the C.I.A. came. Everybody knows them too. The guests from C.I.A. went to the K.G.B. people, and they drank together because if one half of this union collapses the other part will die from starvation.

**ST:** As we're talking right now, are you being watched? Does the K.G.B. know that I'm sitting with you right now in your house?

**VK:** I don't know, maybe, maybe. If they watch us it's not because they think that we are spies. They watch us because to have money they must have spies. Without spies they cannot survive.

**ST:** We met in Kiev eight years ago at a writers' conference and liked each other very much. The thing that attracted me to you is your sense of humor. You realize these big shots—they're clowns in a way—are really frightened of people who are independent, such as yourself, because they also know that you have a tremendous popularity.

**VK:** I am a real patriot and I understand that we must defend our motherland. But at the same time when this general says to me that the way in which I can defend my motherland is to pay him my taxes, I start to laugh. At first I protested. Then I start to laugh. I am a happy man because it's necessary to wake up in the morning and understand that you're an honest man and that you're happy.

**ST:** They're against you because you are dangerous to their jobs.

**VK:** Of course. For many years now we built the image of America as our enemy to justify so many weapons. I don't know about America, but here we don't need so big an army. So I start to fight against the generals. Then the K.G.B.—I start asking to put them under governmental control. We had big riots, big riots in this country and in those riots a lot of people died. I ask K.G.B. officials if they did something to warn the government about the preparations for those riots. If they did warn government, why did not government react to those warnings? If they did not warn it, please what were they doing in those cities? I start investigating the life of our high officials and how they're spending their money. And then I became happy, because it is necessary to be like Studs Terkel and have your own radio show and to speak what you like.

**ST:** So we come to *Ogonyok*, the magazine of which Vitaly Korotich is the editor in chief. It's an old, old magazine, but it has a circulation of . . .

**VK:** Four and a half million.

**ST:** And it now gets 1,000 letters a day, which means 365,000 letters a year. It's unbelievable. These letters are from everybody and you publish them. They're against you; against

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Gorbachev; for Gorbachev; they're for Stalin—some, the old boys, say bring him back—and they're against him. There are anti-Semitic letters. There are brilliant letters. They're from every part of the U.S.S.R., not just Russia.

**VK:** Everywhere. And people everywhere need the same things—food, happiness, a little freedom, to be able to talk about what you want to talk about, and watch what you want to watch. And then you start to be a human being and you are looking for somebody to talk with. And if you don't have Studs Terkel near you, you look for somebody honest enough to discuss your own problems. Such a magazine as ours is possible only in a country with ineffective government.

**ST:** You wrote that in the introduction to a collection of letters in book form, to be called *Small Fires*. You wrote, "Only an ineffective government can produce these hundreds of thousands of letters."

**VK:** I don't want to have thousands of letters a day. Because people are writing me about their bad apartment, their impossible life. They should write to their government but they're writing to me because they trust me more than their government. It's abnormal.

**ST:** This leads to the subject of Gorbachev. What is the situation? Is he going to make it? Should he?

**VK:** Gorbachev started great progress. He was in the center of it all. He started the process, and he teaches us that we must be more democratic and that we must be better. Gorbachev understands what he is doing. Of course sometimes he's not quick enough, sometimes he's not revolutionary enough, sometimes he's softer than we want. He's a politician of realism, of what's possible to do now, today, this morning. And he understands that if those conservative boys come back they'll never forgive him.

**ST:** Everything you say may be true—this guy's a fine guy, trying his best. We're gonna eat in a minute, Zena. But if he is this kind of man why does he seem to be so unpopular? These young students we talked to when you picked me up at the hotel—two bright, brilliant kids . . .

**VK:** Yeah, they don't like him.

**ST:** Why?

**VK:** Because people need miracles. People need everything immediately, today, yesterday. And poor Gorbachev, he's living in the real world. You can't make something quicker than it is possible to make it. Poor Gorbachev is sitting in this hell

and thinking about it, and I think that maybe he'll pay for his attempt. But what he did in Eastern Europe, what he did with us, it is historical, and we must be grateful.

I think that now we have a situation when bureaucratic socialism is dying in Europe. It's a historical moment. The old system which was built here is dying now. The totalitarian regime, which was really terrible and dangerous, is dying. Now we have a situation in which it is possible to live and to be happy. But understand me: In 1917, in this country there was a revolution. I think that Theodore Dreiser, the American writer, was right when he said American workers must be grateful to the Russian Revolution for their unemployment benefits. Changes in the relations between workers and owners became possible, and in many ways, the Russian Revolution helped. But the only country which never used the results of this workers' revolution was our own country. We received instead a totalitarian regime. In the last world war a lot of people died in this country. A lot of people died in my country in the time of Stalin's repressions. I name you this figure: 40 million people. If we give one minute of silence to each one of them, that's 40 million minutes of silence. It's more than seventy-five years of silence, if you want to count it on your calculator. Seventy-five years of silence. It's impossible. Please remember us. We are the greatest hope for humanity. After all we survived. After all that was done with us we're still normal, we're still human beings. And we still believe in human values. A lot of Russians, Ukrainians, Jews died here. But at the same time we understand the value of human life. We understand the value of a piece of bread. Of a friend's smile. Of a drink. We understand how important it is not to be alone. People are dying from solitude.

**ST:** What is socialism to you, Vitaly?

**VK:** For me it's a system in which the man who is working hard is living better than the man who is doing nothing. I think that's all. I want people who are working hard to live better. Once a man told me a joke. He pointed to the sky and said first was Moses, who said everything is from there. Then it was Solomon, and he said everything is from the brain. Then came Jesus, who said everything is from there, and he showed his heart. Then it was Marx and he touched his abdomen and said that everything is from there. Then it was Freud, and he showed . . . and then it was Einstein.

**ST:** Freud, you skipped that. It was the groin of course.

**VK:** Of course, and then Einstein, who said all is relative. I think that all is relative. We are living now in such a situation that all is relative. And we are humanity. And for many years we were taught that the most happy period in our history will be when Americans are unhappy. I think that now we understand that if Americans will be happy, we'll be happy. And I believe that now we are closer to our happiness. If it is terrible in Chicago it will be terrible in my life.

**ST:** Vitaly, you just hit something. I guess it's something all of us think about, but a certain guy comes along and expresses it and Vitaly Korotich is one of them. I think, if I can say this, we live in a certain moment in history that is very much like 400 years ago, the end of the sixteenth century, when Galileo looked through the telescope and he saw that Copernicus was right. That is, the earth is not the center of

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this universe. The sun is in the middle, and the earth revolves like other stars. And now 400 years later there is no country that is the center of the earth. There is no American *century* that Henry Luce of *Time* once said there was, there's no Soviet *century*, there's no Chinese *century*, but the sun is the human *century*. So this is what you're talking about.

**VK:** Please tell that to your generals. Generals can survive only if they have enemies. I think that we must build a new humanity. Please help us. Look at us. If our bureaucracy, if our generals try to destroy the democratic life, please, help us to destroy them. If you have problems, call me. I'll come to you and I'll try to write a book about how hard it is to be yourself in Chicago. I remember the time when I was in Chicago and met the late Dr. Martin Luther King, and I talked about the possibility of being yourself on this globe, and he told me that it's not so easy to be yourself if you have people's opinion against you. Laws are with us, he told me, but if you see ten drunk people on Michigan Avenue, nine white and one black, everybody will say the black man drank more. The same here. We must change the atmosphere. A lot of people are not ready to live in democracy. Once dinosaurs were on this globe. Big, big dinosaurs. They all died. Not because different dinosaurs were born with bigger teeth; they died because the climate changed. We must change the climate. Now we are changing the weather. Maybe tomorrow we'll change the climate.

**ST:** Vitaly, you hit something very big when you spoke of the dinosaurs. Nothing destroyed the dinosaurs except the change in climate. They were too big, they could not adjust to the changing topography. Einstein, before he died, said everything in the world has changed since the atom was split, for which he was responsible, with his findings. Everything has changed except the way we think, and unless we think in a fresh way there will be a catastrophe. That's what you're talking about. A change in the way we think. The dinosaurs could not adjust to the whole change.

**VK:** I was close to academician Sakharov, who was one of the most honest men in this country. And always when I asked him if he'll go and fight against the men who were cruel to him, who published lies about him, he said, "Never. Life is so short, I must do something good. I'll fight only for the good." I think he was right and I think we are all trying to live better—Americans, Russians, Ukrainians, Polish, all of us. And living better we'll be more happy. I think we are on the right track.

**ST:** The similarities between the Americans and the Soviets—in ebullience, in exaggerations, in drinking, in generosity when given the chance—are unbelievable.

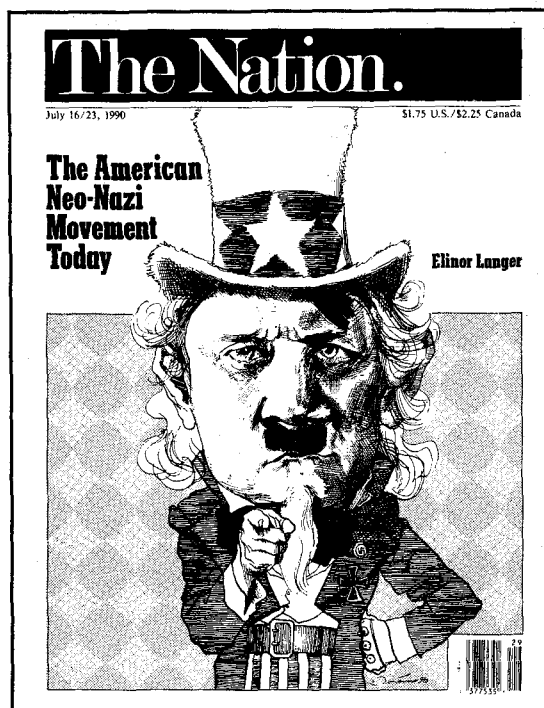
**VK:** In two or three hours it will be midnight in Moscow, and people will be going to sleep. And in Chicago it's high noon. And so I like to think of Chicago as being on duty. Chicago is looking out for my peace. But next morning I'll wake up and Chicago will go to sleep and I want Chicago to know that I'll be looking out for Chicago's peace. So I sometimes think we'll have this situation: You'll go to sleep and I will watch. And I'll go to sleep and you will watch.

**ST:** I'm looking forward to seeing you in Chicago, Vitaly, when you visit. Thank you very much. ☐

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# BOOKS & THE ARTS.

## Exile's Return

CRAIG CHARNEY

**MY TRAITOR'S HEART: A South African Exile Returns to Face His Country, His Tribe, and His Conscience.** By Rian Malan. *Atlantic Monthly Press*. 349 pp. \$19.95.

**M**y *Traitor's Heart* combines the cynical wit of a Tom Wolfe with the poetry of an Alan Paton. A former crime reporter for *The Star*, Johannesburg's leading daily, Rian Malan presents a lively chronicle of his Afrikaner clan as well as gripping stories of racial killings. He tells how it feels to be white in South Africa, revealing the blood knot of ambivalence, violence and fear entangling the races. His book links the political to the personal as few apartheid memoirs have done, while South Africa's crisis makes him confront painful racial issues with an openness rare in the United States.

Yet after almost 350 pages, all Malan offers as a solution is, Love thy neighbor—and rely on the free market. It's a novel yet familiar perspective: neoliberalism, South African style. It reflects the soul-searching and opportunism of a growing number of whites who retain old prejudices and interests but would rather live in a free South Africa than die for a white one. Unlike the Paton-era liberals, who professed humanistic ideals yet favored a limited black franchise, the new liberals are frankly right-wing but reconciled to universal suffrage. Malan's book will form part of their political mythology.

The first part of the book, Malan's family history, begins with Jacques Malan, a Huguenot who fled from persecution in France to the Dutch colony at the Cape of Good Hope in 1688. His descendants included Prime Minister D.F. Malan, who inaugurated the apartheid era in 1948, and Magnus Malan, now Defense Minister.

But the tale that most intrigues the author is that of Dawid Malan. In 1788 Dawid abandoned wife, estate and fortune to run away beyond the Cape fron-

tier with a beautiful young slave named Sara. Yet twenty-seven years later, after the British conquered the Cape, he rebelled against them because they tried to prosecute another white man for ill-treating slaves.

Rian Malan is haunted by the irony of a white who gave up all for a black woman's love, yet fought for the right to lord it over blacks. Across the frontier, Dawid Malan became one of the Afrikaner pioneers brutalized in the fight for land against the Xhosa tribe. His descendant thinks this victory of fear over love marked the start of South Africa's fundamental conflict: war between races and cultures. Racial hatred and terror would mark the Afrikaner character, paving the way for apartheid.

**T**hings seemed to change in Rian Malan's generation, at least in Johannesburg's affluent northern neighborhoods, the local equivalent of the silk-stocking district of New York's Upper East Side. Malan himself typified the *embourgeoisement* accompanying the apartheid economic boom of the 1960s. His father was a personnel manager who pored over American tomes on worker motivation. His childhood "wasn't really African at all," he notes, but "a more or less generically Western childhood, unfolding in generic white suburbs." That meant owning posters of Frank Zappa and Daniel Cohn-Bendit, singing Bob Dylan songs and—the summit of defiance—painting on a roadside, "Say It Out Loud, I'm Black & I'm Proud." Recalling his teenage years, Malan reveals one of South Africa's better-kept secrets: The sixties happened there, too.

We believed that apartheid was stupid and vicious, but we also believed that growing our hair long undermined it. We believed Tolkien's hobbit books were founts of pure wisdom, and that drugs raised one's spiritual quotient. As teen rebels, we considered ourselves among South Africa's oppressed.

After college, Malan covered terrifying township crimes for *The Star*, drank with black reporters and lived in what his parents considered sin. He awoke to the ancestral mix of fear and love he too felt toward blacks, and he came of age in other ways. "I was fixated on apartheid, to be sure," he writes, "but I was equal-

ly agonized about acne and premature ejaculation."

He remembers his white leftist friends with savage humor: "We liked to think of ourselves as brave opponents of tyranny, but the secret police weren't particularly interested in us. Indeed, my worst fear was that someone might stake out a position to the left of mine." He compares the northern neighborhood's white dissenters to passengers in a glass-bottomed boat, watching apartheid's brutality but unable to affect it—and secretly afraid to.

Fearing both the draft and the black rage he witnessed in the Soweto uprising of 1976, Malan left South Africa in 1977. During eight years of record-reviewing and other lite journalism in the United States and elsewhere, the Afrikaner "Communist" saw the light about liberal democracy and capitalism. (He seems not to have noticed the homelessness or the racial polarization around him.) But after the next antiapartheid revolt erupted in 1984, he felt the pull of home and returned, an American book contract in his pocket.

Most of the rest of his book investigates racial coexistence from an unusual angle: how South Africans murder one another. There are accounts of whites killing blacks, blacks killing whites and blacks killing blacks (amid more anecdotes mocking the white left's claim to span the racial divide). Malan's stories are not for weak stomachs. The centerpieces are two long stories set in the southeastern province of Natal, which forty years ago was the green, tranquil setting of Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*.

The first tale is that of the "Hammerman." In 1983 and 1984, Simon Mpungose, a Zulu, bashed in the brains of whites sleeping in their homes. He was whites' worst fantasy come to life: indiscriminate black revenge, a South African Willie Horton. His trial made him seem a classic victim of apartheid—an uneducated, unemployed ex-prisoner traumatized by watching guards beat other convicts to death. He had even had a prophetic dream in jail about shattering white heads with the hammer he used to break rocks. He struggled to resist this urge but after a rebuff from a bigoted white boss finally accepted it as his fate.

There's more to the story, Malan discovers. A Zulu woman explains that Simon was "born wrong": His grand-

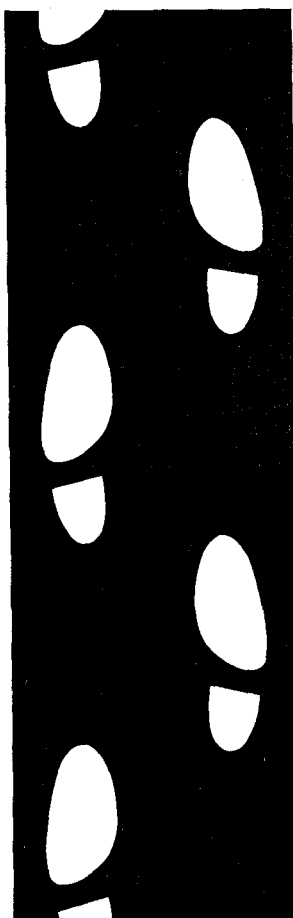
*Craig Charney, who teaches African politics at Yale University, was a reporter in South Africa from 1980 to 1983.*

father married a first cousin, violating the tribe's strict incest taboos. Simon was thus a double outcast, out of place in the white-run world and ostracized by his own people. Neither prosecution nor defense realized this at the trial. The story has a moral: "In my time, in my country, white men assumed that they . . . had subjugated the dreams and psyches of Africans, along with their bodies. It simply wasn't true."

The final tale, more troubling still, is set in Msinga, where Neil Alcock, a white development worker, gave of himself to a rural black community as few other whites have. Once a prosperous farmer who offered surplus milk cheaply to blacks, in 1975 he moved with his wife, Creina, to Msinga. The impoverished, eroded black reservation teemed with Africans (and their cattle) evicted from white farms by apartheid. In times of drought old clan feuds reignited like the dry grass. But Alcock dreamed of making it a prosperous, peaceful, self-reliant community.

One day in 1983, after leaving a peace conference he had set up between two warring clans, Alcock was killed by members of one. For Malan, his death poses the ultimate South African quandary: Can whites find no security—even if they surrender their privileges and live among Africans? Though it's risky, Alcock's widow says there is just one kind: "The only thing you can do is love." Malan's moving conclusion confirms her existentialist view. Hundreds of Zulus gathered to call Alcock's spirit back home—perhaps the first time a white received an African elder's ceremony of resurrection.

Malan's book raises hard questions about race that most white leftists both in and outside of South Africa have preferred not to face. Don't our confused feelings toward blacks—and the overt fears of conservative whites—need examination? How well can progressives identify with blacks as long as we are unfamiliar with their tongues, customs and kin ties? Alongside the familiar laws of the market and the state, mustn't equal attention go to relations based on age, ancestry and gender? How should a non-racial democracy treat the distinctive customs of minorities, such as those who think witches should be burned (rural Africans) or those who won't offer bride-price in marriage (whites)? American progressives would do well to ponder those issues in relation to South Africa and the parallels in our own country.



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## ROOF BOOKS ANNOUNCES

***The Politics of Poetic Form: Poetry and Public Policy*** Edited by Charles Bernstein.

A collection of 14 essays by contemporary poets and critics that expand on the discussions presented in *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E*, including essays by Jerome Rothenberg, Ron Silliman, Susan Howe, Jerome McGann, Rosmarie Waldrop, Nathaniel Mackey, Bruce Andrews, Nicole Brossard, Erica Hunt, Jackson Mac Low, and Charles Bernstein.

250pp. \$12.95, \$21.95 (cloth).

***areas/lights/heights Writings 1954-1989*** by Larry Eigner Edited by Ben Friedlander. 25 critical pieces from 30 years of Eigner's work on and thought about poetry.

192 pp. \$12, \$22 (cloth).

***Raik*** by Ray DiPalma The word choices in each poem stir awareness of each letter in the line. DiPalma has opened a new door to form in this major work.

108pp. \$9.95.

***Relation*** by Diane Ward Ward's first book, *Never Without One*, won San Francisco State's Poetry Prize. It prompted Kenneth Funston to write in the *Los Angeles Times*, "Reading Ward . . . is to become a participant in a dynamic building up and tearing down of language and idea rather than a silent witness to the slick rendering of the poet's personal experience." 64 pp., \$7.50

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Unfortunately, Malan exaggerates racial and cultural difference by presenting a partial slice of his country's reality as the whole. He focuses on black South Africa's marginal (and to whites, exotic) elements: conservative elders, rural blacks, migrant workers from the reservations and the syncretistic separatist churches. Missing is the black mainstream—the urban proletariat and middle classes, students and the mainline churches—which forms the A.N.C.'s organized base. Malan's tales of murder somehow omit the killing of thousands of A.N.C. supporters by pro-government black vigilantes and members of the conservative Zulu Inkatha movement, as well as the shootouts between A.N.C. guerrillas and security forces. Indeed, Malan's representation of black politics borders on caricature. The A.N.C. of Nelson Mandela is presented as a band of thugs and Reds, while Inkatha's leader, Gatsha Buthelezi, is called a "black democrat."

Malan's comments on the white left are also overdone. Oddly, after telling how politics affects private life, he refuses to admit civil society's impact on politics. He writes off as mere fashion the pivotal role whites played from 1977 to 1985 in setting up black unions and community groups; changing white opinion via politics, the news media, the arts and the churches; assisting the black resistance; and working for educational reform. That sounds a lot like rationalization from someone who says all he did was "get drunk, get laid, and make money" in America during those years.

Malan also recycles white myths that historians have spent the past two decades debunking. While to him the Xhosa were "savage" expansionists who reached the Cape when the Boers did, radiocarbon dating has shown that black Africans were in the region by A.D. 400. The old saw echoed by Malan, that frontier clashes explain apartheid, has given way before evidence that racial attitudes and controls were hardened by economics—by industrializing South Africa's hunger for cheap black labor. His generalizations about Africa (a place "where the strong eat and the weak are eaten—or beaten") reek of stereotypes.

Together, the exaggerations, omissions and errors convey a troubling subtext. The stress on cultural differences and the disregard of commonalities paint South Africa's conflict as reciprocal incomprehension and fear. Minimizing whites' role in the opposition maintains the neatness

of the black-white confrontation. The myth of simultaneous arrival wipes out the rights and wrongs of colonization, since both sides are guilty. Finally, if apartheid is rooted in racial attitudes—not in the development of South African capitalism—then what's needed is essentially a change of heart.

Though *My Traitor's Heart* describes real fears and divisions that make reconciliation in South Africa difficult, Malan fails to see that they are as much the fruit of racial exploitation as its cause. His democratic commitment is clear, and his

recasting of the right's discourse on a nonracial basis is a welcome sign of the normalization of South African politics now under way. Ironically, however, Malan's call for a leap of faith from whites is pertinent precisely because they remain obsessed with race conflicts and blind to those of class. But in Kenya and Zimbabwe, the end of white rule meant land transfers and tax hikes, not a night of the long knives. In South Africa, too, it will ultimately mean bargaining about real social change, not just overcoming a failure to communicate. □

## Past Present

GWYNETH CRAVENS

A reading group I belong to meets occasionally around the kitchen table of the artist and jewelry maker Ruth Gugenheim Nivola. One night we were discussing a Grimm story in which a youth comes to learn the speech of animals. Could such tales reflect the human yearning to understand the indecipherable language of nature? Gus Kiley, a mythologist, the general manager of Zone Books in New York City and the son-in-law of Ruth Nivola, brought out a thick volume and read aloud an inscription from an Egyptian temple: "I am all that is and that was and that shall be, and no mortal hath lifted my veil." He read on. Immanuel Kant had said of this inscription, "More sublime words were never uttered, nor a thought ever expressed more magnificently."

I asked to see the book. My first reaction, upon noting its heft and its wide, creamy margins and delicate pages—1,473 of them, filled with stately columns of poetry and prose in ancient Greek and Latin, Old English, Old French, Icelandic, Middle English, Middle High German, medieval Latin and Italian, Provençal, Portuguese and Spanish, followed by their translations—was that the book was so well crafted and so exceptional in its contents that it must surely be out of print. And I also felt that the book embodied the ambiance of the entire Nivola family (whose patriarch was the late sculptor Constantine Nivola), an ambiance of uncomplicated beauty and bare

elegance. Although the Nivolas are dedicated readers, they keep in their home—an orderly farmhouse on the east end of Long Island in which even the arrangement of Sardinian baskets and bowls on the kitchen walls forms a work of art—only the books they consider essential. To see Tino Nivola's marble sculptures, Cycladic in their simplicity, and to hear the stories of his early years in an ancient village in Sardinia, is to be plunged into the archaic world, where all that is superfluous has long been polished away and myth and nature intersect; an ear of wheat is as precious as gold, its transformation into bread a sacred ritual.

*The Limits of Art* takes its name from a statement by Parrhasius: "This I say, even though they that hear believe not: I declare that the clear limits of this art have been found under my hand, and the goal is set that may not be overpassed, though there is no human work with which fault may be found." In the preface the editor, Huntington Cairns (he was a self-taught scholar of the classics, literature and history, as well as counsel for the National Gallery of Art), describes his monumental compilation as an anthology of works of Western literature "that have been held by competent critics to touch, in one way or another, the limits of art. That is to say, the selections have been pronounced perfect or the greatest of their kind. . . . The work of a recognized writer is not included here unless in the considered judgment of a responsible critic it is, in some sense, superlative. . . . Here is what criticism has held, at various times and places since its beginnings in ancient Greece, to be supreme in poetry or prose." Aristotle considered a poem to be perfect when it cannot be added to or subtracted from, and Longinus considered a poem to be great

*Gwyneth Cravens's latest novel, The Gates of Paradise, will be published in October by Ticknor & Fields. She edits Past Present, an occasional column.*

when it transports or overwhelms the reader. Aristotle insisted that art must discover that which is universal, enduring and essential. The hundreds of critics whose hundreds of choices have been assembled here tend to follow those guidelines in their accompanying observations. Thus we get excerpts from Homer admired by, among others, Aristotle, Quintilian, Longinus, Addison, Chateaubriand, De Quincey, Cowper and Burke; those from Dante, by Coleridge, Tennyson, Eliot and Macaulay; those from Shakespeare, by Swinburne, Hazlitt, Santayana, Saintsbury, Kousman and Sitwell. Almost every passage appears in the language in which it was written along with the best available translation. The result for the reader is cumulative; one begins to understand more deeply what has been meant by the universal, the enduring and the essential.

"The moon has set, and the Pleiads; it is the middle of the night and time passes, time passes, and I lie alone," goes a fragment from Sappho, which moves Aldous Huxley to write, "Not even the best of the Chinese could have said more in so small a compass." Of chapter one of *Pride and Prejudice*, Gerald Bullett comments, "Possibly the shortest, wittiest, and most workmanlike first chapter in English fiction."

Old favorites are mingled with surprises. One entry under the name of John Milton is "Macbeth" followed by a blank and the citation of the source, *Imaginary Works*. The critique is from Arthur Quiller-Couch: "The most fascinating poem—certainly, if play it were, the most fascinating play—ever unwritten." And W.B. Yeats praises "Parable," a short story by Oscar Wilde:

Christ came from a white plain to a purple city, and as He passed through the first street, He heard voices overhead, and saw a young man lying drunk upon a window-sill. "Why do you waste your soul in drunkenness?" He said. "Lord, I was a leper and You healed me, what else can I do?" A little further through the town He saw a young man following a harlot and said, "Why do you dissolve your soul in debauchery?" and the young man answered, "Lord, I was blind and You healed me, what else can I do?" At last in the middle of the city He saw an old man crouching, weeping upon the ground, and when He asked why he wept, the old man answered, "Lord, I was dead, and You raised me into life, what else can I do but weep?"

"He has written what he calls the best

short story in the world, and will have it that he repeats it to himself on getting out of bed and before every meal," Yeats remarks. "Wilde published that story a little later, but spoiled it with the verbal decoration of his epoch, and I have to repeat it to myself as I first heard it, before I can see its terrible beauty. I no more doubt its sincerity than I doubt that his parade of gloom, all that late rising, and sleeping away his life, that elaborate playing with tragedy, was an attempt to escape from an emotion by its exaggeration."

The anthology begins with Homer's invocation to the muse to sing of Achilles and of "the vengeance, deep and deadly; whence to Greece/Unnumber'd ills arose"; passes through the Golden Age and biblical and Roman times to the Middle Ages, in which Augustine declares that all he possesses is his will, and Roland and the Nibelungen perish, and Héloïse bids farewell to Abélard, and Richard the Lion-Hearted languishes in prison, and Walther von der Vogelweide's nightingale sings sweetly in the heather, and Dante enters the gate of Hell and pilgrims make their way to Canterbury; it marches on through the centuries commemorated by Cervantes and his story of "one of those old-fashioned gentlemen, who are never without a lance upon a rack, an old target, a lean horse, and a greyhound," by Spenser and his Cave of Mammon, by Shakespeare and his kings and roisterers and murderers and fools, by Mme. de Sévigné and her breathless letter about a royal engagement, by the acuties of Racine, Swift, Addison and Johnson; onward it goes, into the nineteenth century, crowded with pleasure domes and nightingales and mountain peaks and wailing forests and deserted maidens and orphans and hymns to sorrow, and on through the afternoon of Mallarmé's faun, and into the present era and the illness of Proust's grandmother (actually, "Marcel's" grandmother) and the death of Valéry's Monsieur Teste, until at last, brimming with a new sense of the tradition that forms the basis of all our thought, we are left with the murmuring of Joyce's Dublin washerwoman muses scrubbing beside the "rivering waters of, hitherandthithering waters of. Night!"

And what themes do the great and sublime writers return to over the ages? Love (again and again), battles, light and darkness, the fleeting moment, human folly, nature, the divine, old age, sorrow and death (again and again). For the most

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part, the selections are fresh and modern. "So there he fell, and slept a sleep of bronze," says Homer. "Bah! you can fall asleep on any subject. . . . Sleep can continue any idea," says Valéry.

By some miracle, *The Limits of Art* remains in print—although not for long. It is part of the Bollingen Series, a distinguished project which was dedicated to publishing, originally under the auspices of Pantheon Books, works on culture, psychology, literature, archeology, mythology and art; which was funded by Paul Mellon starting in 1943; and which will conclude in a few years, having demonstrated, in the words of Kenneth Rexroth, "a steady drive toward reclaiming interiority, reinstating values that cannot be reduced to quantities; an adventure for significance, a quest for meaning." (I wish someone with that sort of money and with the same interest in excellence would read William McGuire's history of the undertaking, *Bollingen Adventure* [Princeton/Bollingen paperbacks, \$14.95], and come away inspired to initiate a similar program.) *The Limits of Art* appeared in 1948 to scholarly and popular acclaim and was kept alive until the series was taken over in 1969 by Princeton University Press. (For a copy, phone 1-800-777-4726 or write 3175 Princeton Pike, Lawrenceville, New Jersey 08648.) Princeton divided the anthology into poetry, prose and criticism, and sold these as three paperback volumes. The one on criticism has gone out of print and the plan is that the poetry (\$16.50) and prose (\$17.50) volumes will also be allowed to dwindle away. The best one to own—for you and your grandchildren—is the original clothbound volume (\$65), but only a few are left. Since the book at present sells just a handful of copies a year, not even a nonprofit university press can justify keeping it in print.

Of course, we readers must go on scolding publishing conglomerates for shunning books of merit, but we also have to take on some responsibility for preventing the extinction of such rare species as *The Limits of Art*. For the price of ten movie tickets you can own a book whose contents have outlasted the centuries—and in some cases, the millenniums. □

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## Kicking Nixon Around

DAVID RUDENSTINE

THE WARS OF WATERGATE: The Last Crisis of Richard Nixon. By Stanley I. Kutler. Knopf. 733 pp. \$24.95.

Sixteen years ago this August, Richard Nixon stood before loyal members of his Administration with tears in his eyes and spoke of his father ("a great man because he did his job") and mother ("a saint"). This might have been a private farewell for his close associates, who had gathered in the East Room of the White House to say goodbye to the man who had chosen to resign the presidency rather than face impeachment. But Nixon invited the press and turned the occasion into a spectacle that was broadcast live to the nation. This pathetic event marked the beginning of the durable politician's last campaign—to escape Watergate and secure an honorable place in history.

The purpose of Stanley Kutler's *The Wars of Watergate* is to make sure that Nixon does not "capture the soul of history" by inflicting a "collective national amnesia on historians, the media, and our political leadership regarding Watergate." For Kutler, a historian at the University of Wisconsin, "Watergate remains contested history," and he believes the contest's outcome is highly significant because Watergate raised profound questions about America's political behavior, values and structure.

The major strength of Kutler's book is that it is the first thorough, serious appraisal of Watergate written at a distance from the events. *The Wars of Watergate* is based on substantial original research, including sixty-four interviews (with, among others, Spiro Agnew, Robert Bork, John Dean, Richard Helms, Melvin Laird and John Mitchell, but not with Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger, John Ehrlichman, Bob Haldeman or Chuck Colson). Neither a biography of Nixon nor a full account of his presidency, the book is likely to remain the standard guide on the Watergate scandal for some time.

For the most part, Kutler skillfully presents the multilayered, bizarre tale of Watergate. He effectively describes the relations among the members of the House

Judiciary Committee who composed the so-called bipartisan coalition that voted the articles of impeachment. He offers a fascinating portrait of Senator Howard Baker's effort to be a star on the Watergate committee while trying to reassure the White House that he was on its team. He mercilessly describes the deceit, backstabbing and betrayals among Nixon and his top aides.

As good as Kutler's book is, however, it is a disappointment. Although his research is impressive, Kutler offers little that is new; the main Watergate mysteries remain. Who was "Deep Throat"? Who was responsible for the eighteen-and-a-half-minute tape gap? Did Nixon authorize the break-in at the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist? Did Nixon know about the planned break-in at the Democratic Party headquarters? The absence of bombshells is not altogether surprising, for Watergate has been well raked over by reporters and commentators. To be sure, Kutler has his own distinctive views on some matters. For example, he minimizes the importance of the press in breaking the Watergate story; he praises the U.S. Attorney's office for its investigation of the break-in at Democratic headquarters; he provides unflattering portraits of Peter Rodino, chair of the House Judiciary Committee, and of John Doar, the committee's chief counsel. But these stand at the margin of his major claim, Nixon's culpability, which he establishes by using familiar evidence.

Kutler tells a good story, but he falters when he steps back and tries to place Watergate in a larger historical context. Not surprisingly, he pins much of the responsibility for Watergate on Nixon's "lifelong political personality." To his credit, Kutler does not engage in superficial psychohistory or use the jargon of psychoanalysis to establish his claim. He lets the tapes speak for themselves, and along with the power of his detailed narrative, they illuminate Nixon's darker side.

But Kutler also roots Watergate in what he views as an unprecedented assault on Lyndon Johnson's presidency mounted by the antiwar movement. Kutler claims that those who drove Johnson out of the White House did not ponder the consequences of their actions or perceive that worse was yet to come. Kutler suggests that Nixon's effort to escape the politics of deadlock—his as-

David Rudenstine, a professor at Cardozo Law School, is writing a book about the Pentagon Papers case.

section of the power to impound and his effort to reorganize the executive branch, positions that enraged critics of the "imperial presidency"—might be understood in part as a legitimate effort to rebuild the presidency in the wake of those attacks. But Kutler fails to make his point convincingly, and Nixon's claim of authority seems rooted more in a reckless disregard of separation of powers than in an understandable belief that an effective presidency required strengthening. Moreover, Kutler's caustic comments on the antiwar movement, the press's reporting on the Vietnam War, and Senator Eugene McCarthy's primary challenge to President Johnson suggest that he is less interested in a serious analysis of the president's relative powers and in shedding light on the Watergate debacle than he is in settling old scores with the antiwar movement.

Kutler is similarly unpersuasive when he tries to provide the reasons for Nixon's downfall. He claims that Nixon's presidency disintegrated because "the coun-

try had come together on the fundamental proposition that virtue mattered" and because the "practiced traditions of constitutionalism and the rule of law still count for much." Certainly public impatience with Nixon's lies and public expectations that Nixon and his men should obey the law contributed to his fall. But it strains credulity to rely upon these ideals to explain Nixon's demise, when there is ample evidence that the public has considerable tolerance for public officials who are short on virtue and who bypass the law.

Kutler's able chronicle of Watergate delivers a decimating blow to Nixon and his apologists who maintain that he was innocent of wrongdoing or that the crime of Watergate was blown out of proportion by political opponents. But *The Wars of Watergate* fails to illuminate the larger political and social meaning of Watergate. If it had, we would not only better understand Watergate but also Nixon's most recent resurrection as an elder statesman. □

## Indian Summer

REGINALD OLLEN

THE TONGUES OF ANGELS. By Reynolds Price. Atheneum. 192 pp. \$17.95.

One of my strongest camp memories dates from 1974, when all of us Christian campers were summoned back to our cabins. Each cabin had a small black-and-white television, on which we were told to watch the flickering President of the United States say farewell. Then we said a prayer and off we went to archery.

Understandably, I approached the new novel by Reynolds Price, *The Tongues of Angels*, with a bit of apprehension, this being the tale of a counselor and his campers in the 1950s, when boys spent the summer learning to be men. (At my camp, the boys learned how to tell pot smoke from burning leaves.) But my natural association of corruption and the decay of an empire with camptime did not interfere with my enjoyment of *The Tongues of Angels*. One comes away from this novel with the certainty that, regardless of what cultural baggage—or garbage—we carry into the forest, the majesty of nature and the mysterious

spirit of our Native American past are things to carry home forever.

As is true of all Price's works, the telling is as important as the tale, the confessional power of the language evident from page one, paragraph one:

I'm as peaceful a man as you're likely to meet in America now, but this is about a death I may have caused. Not slowly over time by abuse or meanness, but on a certain day and by ignorance, by plain lack of notice. Though it happened thirty-four years ago, and though I can't say it's haunted my mind that many nights lately, I suspect I can draw it out for you now, clear as this noon.

The American Indian plays a large role in the ensuing story, in the person of a Native American counselor named Bright Day, in the practice of Indian ceremonies at the camp and in the remarkable dancing skills of camper Raphael Noren, in whose death Price's narrator, Bridge Boatner, believes he was complicit. The frank ease with which Price calls forth his tale keeps the narration just short of gushing; *The Tongues of Angels* is thus sentimental, but in the older, more positive sense of the word, the sense that the word "liberal" once had.

Price sets his scene, and convincingly so, against a background of postwar bliss: The question of good and evil ap-

Reginald Ollen is a writer living in Brooklyn.

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pears laid to rest, for the time being, as Hitler is dead and the summer is four months long. The story is narrated by aging artist Bridge Boatner, recollecting in tranquillity the summer when 21-year-old aspiring artist Bridge Boatner landed a job as a counselor and artist-in-residence at Camp Juniper.

What results is a small story of Bridge's friendship with Bright Day and the other counselors, respect for the camp's founder (the "Chief") and his wife, and a strange affinity with the doomed camper Rafe Noren. This remarkable boy can see Bridge coming out as an artist, appreciates the large landscape Bridge develops layer upon layer as the summer progresses—and Bridge encourages the artist hiding in the youth. Rafe the child seems in many ways a greater artist than Bridge in either his summer or autumn years. At age 14, Rafe sparkles and dances, confounds and eludes any adult scrutiny. Rafe is Rimbaud to Bridge's Verlaine. He meets his death while imitating Bridge, climbing a mountain on the last day of camp rather than resting to recuperate from a snakebite that might not have proved fatal.

Bridge himself is mesmerized by Rafe and his "eagle dance," is much taken with the boy's possession of spirit. Longing to be let into Rafe's confidence, Bridge's parry and thrust with the boy goes on day and night. Beyond the enigma of the child, Bridge's obsession with the camper is traced to a shared pain: The artist had lost his father only a year before, slowly and with suffering. Rafe too had been witness to a tragedy only a few years beforehand—the murder of his mother—and Bridge could only marvel at his development:

This was a boy who had some way managed to use an event that was dreadful on any scale, and that happened in his home, to build himself a man's mind and body. I quickly recalled myself at fourteen. I was smothering then in alternate gags of self-love and -hate, sexual claustrophobia and dreams of obscene private power.

Now, this is no Smoky Mountains *Death in Venice*. We all have known remarkable children, and sexual attraction is too simple, too easy a way to describe fascination, obsession and affection for a child who seems a step beyond precocious. (The closest that Rafe and Bridge come to bonding is in agreeing that Rafe will receive the canvas that is the work of the entire summer for Bridge.) Yet the whole novel seems rife with near misses,

near sexual encounters between these two. Meetings at night, meetings in Indian ceremonies, meetings in the forest for Rafe to model as a cherub (resulting in the snakebite!). Bridge the narrator needs to tell one story, but Bridge the memory seems to act out something much more. The first glimpse we have of Rafe he's in the nude:

His face was also well advanced in its walk towards the uncluttered dignity it might have had at forty. And though his body was still supported on the compact bones of childhood, he was taller than his age—maybe five foot nine—and the skin of his calves and lower belly had grown the gold hair of first manhood. I'd grown it myself, only seven years before. But young as I was, I could already see it wearing away on my ankles and losing the metallic luster that makes you feel more like some brand of ram with gold fleece than a helpless boy.

There is more, but not much more. Price seems to be playing a game with commitment—am I or am I not? Are these symbols or are these not? Will there be love or not? For most of the read this literary dance is intriguing; but ultimately, it is exasperating. An anticlimactic story line and the dwindling intensity of Price's language as the novel progresses leave one thankful for the digressions, as Bridge draws freely upon Jung, invokes the AIDS crisis and peels the skin off many a truth as he dogs his tale.

Stylistically, both Price's admirers and his detractors will find themselves thrown for a loop. Known for brandishing his literary weapons, Price merely adorns the parlor with them this time out. But this isn't the first time he has shifted gears at full speed. After kicking in the door at *Harper's* in 1962 with *A Long and Happy Life*, a first novel serialized in its entirety, followed by success with *The Names and Faces of Heroes* and *A Generous Man*, Price had established himself as among the most gifted and profound verbal acrobats of the South. These mad books of rural adolescence, passion and family, later to be grouped as the Mustian Trilogy, would influence (even if unacknowledged) a generation of writers, including the early Thomas McGuane, and Barry Hannah and Ken Kesey.

Perhaps the Southern Writer label alone led him to change, to wish to be recognized as more than a sound, a regional flavor or a condiment of phrasing, so in 1968 Price took a big chance with the

somber *Love and Work*, and followed it a couple years later with *Permanent Errors*, a short-story collection that has never received its due praise. These works are moody, quiet studies of the insides of things rather than brash depictions of their outsides. With uncertain footing, critics gave a cool reception to *The Surface of Earth* and most of Price's other intense fictional creations of the 1970s. It was not until *Kate Vaiden*, in 1986, that he charmed his way back into the public eye. With that novel and the subsequent *Good Hearts*, some of Price's finest fiction to date, he articulated a percussive Southern sound that shifted his earliest, brightest voices several octaves in register, often employing delirious streams of dialogue or monologue that read with the madcap sensibility of a Preston Sturges screenplay.

Looking over Price's work, it seems a L shame that Camp Juniper is not coded. He has always had a deft hand with female characters; many Price women have a touch of Rosacoke Mustian, his first creation and what remains his most enduring voice. In *Tongues*, the brief appearance of a single mother and her child at the home of Thomas Wolfe is, oddly, the most memorable incident in the novel. In this scene Bridge Boatner sees a friend of spirit, but a friend he must walk away from if he expects to go on with his life. She carries a baby and a sordid history that is all too familiar to Bridge, who sympathizes in a situation where confidence is tantamount to commitment:

This was a deeply Southern transaction, even though she was mountaineer and I was piedmont. Many Americans would die naked in the road before they'd tell you what's hurt them the worst. But born Southerners will show you the cell in their heart that burns the hardest. They'll hold it right towards you, in their bare right hand. This girl had done that for me, Lord God.

It reads as if Reynolds Price is acknowledging his own debt to characters such as Rosacoke Mustian and Kate Vaiden, creations he is heart-to-heart with but that he must leave behind now and then to gain new perspective. Unfortunately, the confessional perspective Price adopts here doesn't quite burn hard. Although the departure in style is welcome, he has left behind too much of the energy that has become his mark as a writer. Even his darkest work seems to be actively wait-

ing, like the timber rattler that bit Rafe. Reynolds Price does quite a turn around the campfire, but this is not his eagle dance. □

## ART.

ARTHUR C. DANTO

Francis Bacon

Grammar makes certain sentences available to us that are useless for any purpose other than philosophical jokes. "I am screaming," for example, is what philosophers term self-stultifying: The conditions under which it could be true are inconsistent with its being uttered, so it cannot but be false if said or even written. Thus the lie is transparent to all but the writer when the hateful and ludicrous Fanny Squeers, in *Nicholas Nickleby*, puts into a letter "I am screaming out loud all the time I write" as an excuse for mistakes. One cannot scream and write letters at the same time, in part because the circumstances that explain the scream rule out the possibility of concurrent rational action. The scream ordinarily implies some loss of will, something the screamer cannot help despite resolutions of silence, as in the torture chamber or the pit in hell. But that does not leave the will free for other pursuits. Or, if we can imagine someone knitting and screaming, it would have to be someone mad, and the scream, like the lunatic's laugh, disconnected from the network of circumstances in which either expression has the meaning of terror, say, or mirth.

Much the same considerations apply to cases in which an artist paints a scream. It is always a reasonable inference in such cases that the scream cannot be the artist's own, for the mere fact that the representation is clear enough to be recognized as of a scream is inconsistent with that. Painting, in whatever way it facilitates the expression of emotions, cannot be a kind of scream if it is in fact of a kind of scream. This is an important truth to keep in mind when viewing the painted screams of Francis Bacon.

Bacon's images of screaming popes are among the great defining images of twentieth-century art, and certainly they were taken, in the early postwar years when they first appeared, to be artistic summations of an era of unspeakable agony and horror. And they affect us even today, and against the body of Ba-

con's far less compelling subsequent work, perhaps because we cannot be indifferent to screams—not even when we know, for example, that someone is only practicing for a part that requires him to scream, just because that particular sound, issued through a human mouth, must trigger in us reflexes over which we have as little control as screamers themselves are supposed to have at the moment of impulse. And a painted scream comparably summons up associations through which it is vested with moral meaning. This is especially so when, as with Bacon's popes, there is no context, within the painting, to account for the scream. When Poussin paints a woman screaming in his *Massacre of the Innocents* (a painting frequently cited as among Bacon's early influences), her scream is a natural response to the butchery of helpless children. When Eisenstein shows the screaming nurse in *Battleship Potemkin* (another source unfailingly cited for Bacon), there is, in the massacre on the steps, all the explanation we need for the grimace of impotence and despair and pain condensed in the shape of her mouth. Seen just as a frame, clipped out of the film, the scream of Eisenstein's nurse still implies a narrative which the shattered glasses and shot-out eye enable us to fill in. There is no available narrative for Bacon's screaming pontiff, all the less so when we appreciate that the painting is itself a modified appropriation of the celebrated portrait by Velázquez of Innocent X. The occurrence of the word "innocent" in two of Bacon's acknowledged sources is possibly worth keeping in mind, though the papal name, in the case of this particular bearer of it, was one of the great examples of ironic nomenclature in the history of mislabeling. Velázquez's portrait simply shows the wily churchman, in white lace and red silk, enthroned in a curtained chamber, wearing an expression that rules out screams.

Everyone in fact admires the psychology of Velázquez's portrait, and the larger meanings to which the psychology must contribute. Innocent is looking up from some document held loosely in his left hand, and looks out at us beaming authority, power, mercilessness, guile, defiance, resolution and contempt from his terrifying eyes. It is the look a shepherd might direct to his sheep only if his mind were fixed on mutton. Innocent may have been indifferent to the expression Velázquez gave him, or possibly he was pleased by it as an outward sign of a man danger-

ous to trifle with, but one cannot, today at least, refrain from drawing lessons from the fact that this highest position in the universal church should have been occupied by a man whose character was so at odds with the charity and love that ought to be emblemized physiognomically. It is a tension not easily rationalized, though in its own right it may express a deep truth of Catholicism. Bacon's pope has no psychology to speak of, since the scream leaves no space for other expressions and is in any case not really an expression of someone's character. A scream implies an absolute reduction of its emitter to whatever state it is that the scream outwardly expresses. There are no wry screamers, no crafty screamers. The scream is a momentary mask. Still, the fact that it is a pope who screams raises some delicate questions of interpretation. In the language of symbols, the image of the pope carries the obvious meanings that flow from his position as Christ's surrogate on earth and intercessor for the salvational needs of mankind. The question is why someone with the extreme moral weight of a pope should be shown screaming when, within the canvas, there is nothing that accounts for the act.

It must of course be decided whether the pope is screaming *at* something—whether there is an object—or whether, like the screams of the damned and the tortured, he cannot help screaming because of unendurable pain. There are screams of horror, after all, where the witness is overcome by something seen or heard. The pope's scream cannot be objectless, one feels, since he is seated in his throne or on his palanquin (which is one way of reading the yellow curves in Bacon's painting), unless he is supposed insane, like a crazy in the park. He could, if this were an internal symbol for Christians, be screaming at Christ's agony, or in grief, like one of the Marys so often shown at the base of the cross. Whatever the object, it must be commensurate with the stature of the pope as pope. Think, for contrast, of the famous screamer in Munch's *The Scream*, of 1895. A woman (one assumes) is shown running toward us, over a bridge, with a couple in the distance walking away, as if indifferent to her anguish. The screamer's object (if there is one) must, one is certain, be some fraught personal situation she finds unendurable: The image is a depiction of personal extremity. And this fits with Munch's work—his themes are sickness, jealousy, bereavement, madness, sexual torment—as well as what we

know of his character and his life. But none of this would fit with the screamer's being a pope, all got up in ecclesiastical regalia. Neither, in truth, does it fit with Bacon, from what we know of him as a person. And the assumption would have been, in the postwar years, that the pope was screaming as the only appropriate moral response to the fallenness of mankind and the world as slaughter-bench. As such, it could not but be a powerful image, even if somewhat crudely painted, save for the lavender capelet. Somehow, if a message, it must have seemed too urgent to be conveyed through a piece of elegant painting. The powdery white, the swipes of yellow and the vertical slashes that are vestigial reminders of Velázquez's drapes, though they also suggest a deluge, are secondary marks of the moral lamentation of the howling prelate. One would have wanted to scream in sympathy: "And with that cry I have raised my cry," as Yeats writes.

All of Bacon's work in those years, whether or not of popes, appears to be of screams or to call for screams. In his *Painting*, of 1946, an early acquisition by the Museum of Modern Art, which is honoring Bacon with a retrospective ex-

hibition (until August 28), the screamer is in a business suit, a yellow boutonniere in his lapel and the upper half of his face cast in shadow by his umbrella. He is surrounded by butchered meat, including, behind him, an immense gutted carcass hung by its legs. The carcass of beef, in Rembrandt's painting of one, seems to connote helplessness of a nearly cosmic order and comes across as a symbol of suffering, as it does in a bloody painting by Soutine. There is a harsh contrast in Bacon's image between the regular rhythm of bones and teeth and that of torn flesh and a world torn by the scream of the man, whose umbrella is an affecting symbol of ineffective protection, certainly against the forces that rend flesh, eviscerate bodies, consume in pain and flame. *Painting*, in context, had to have conveyed some political message and, to use the irrepressible word from those days, existential mood. And there are several images of heads that bear out this heavy inescapable reading, for they seem to have no discernible features other than toothed cavities, as if their owners had died, beaten to some pulp, with a terminal scream on their lips. In some cases, the screamer is seated, as the pope is, but in such a way and in such a space that it

could be the electric chair they are in. And in all or most of these, the vertical lines rain down, cleansing perhaps, purging, or just adding to the agony, having no connection to the vertical fall of drapes from Velázquez.

So, if not strictly Bacon's screams, these depicted screams seem to entitle us to some inference that they at least express an attitude of despair or outrage or condemnation, and that in the medium of extreme gesture the artist is registering a moral view toward the conditions that account for scream upon scream upon scream. How profoundly disillusioning it is then to read the artist saying, in a famous interview he gave to David Sylvester for *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews With Francis Bacon*, "I've always hoped in a sense to be able to paint the mouth like Monet painted a sunset." As if, standing before one of those canvases, Bacon were to say, "Well, there, I think, I very nearly got a screaming mouth as it should be painted. Damned hard to do." Or to read that "Horrible or not . . . his pictures were not supposed to mean a thing." So Cézanne painted apples, Renoir nudes, Monet sunsets, Bacon screams. To paint a scream because it is a difficult thing to paint, where the difficulty is not at all emotional but technical, like doing a human figure in extreme foreshortening or capturing the evanescent pinks of sunrise over misting water, is really a form of perversion. As a perversion, it marks this strange artist's entire corpus. It is like a rack maker who listens to the screams of the racked only as evidence that he has done a fine job. It is inhuman. As humans, however, we cannot be indifferent to screams. We are accordingly victims ourselves, manipulated in our moral being by an art that has no such being, though it looks as if it must. It is for this reason that I hate Bacon's art.

Bared teeth and exposed bones play a referential role in some of Bacon's later works, particularly in two triptychs, one of which, *Three Studies for a Crucifixion*, shows the victim hung upside-down in the right panel, like an emptied carcass, with his head lying in what one supposes must be his own spilled viscera. But by this stage in his development, Bacon had begun to treat his figures virtually as viscera, as lumps and gobbets and tubes of flesh, not easily identified anatomically, pink and red and white, as if his subjects were what was left when skin and bones were removed. So shapeless are they, as piles and puddles of scraped

#### KREUZBERG

##### *in the Rhön Mountains, Bavaria*

That first time, climbing with my father  
up to the Kreuzberg, I found  
a raven on the forest path—  
soft as black talc on my fingers  
when I picked it up, a lifeless luster.  
Its wings unfurled as if fear  
rather than death could still  
bear it into flight. Now I wonder  
whether it was a child's first waking  
or just my eight-year-old's savage faith  
that seized my thoughts that day and made me  
insist on carrying that dark thing  
to the mountaintop and lay it where Franciscans  
had made a Golgotha. A child  
dwarfed by such realism can wish for miracles,  
can cry when the dead stay dead. I knew nothing  
then of other German golgothas when I went away  
uncomforted. And so today, standing here again  
before these emblems of sacrifice, remorse,  
and unrepentance so high above the Fulda Gap  
where armies now grow old with patience,  
I look down over this borderland and see  
the sutures that bind the ruptures of the past  
and strangely summon up that fallen scavenger  
and my prayer for a healing.

Richard Foerster

and squeezed paint, that one is grateful at times for the mouths, as dentated wounds, to serve as some point of orientation. In the middle panel of this triptych, for example, a figure lies, like a pile of guts, on an elegant chaise longue, blood splattering the pillowcase and rising, like red bubbles, up past the black window shade in some piecemeal ascension. The teeth locate us in the gore, so we can identify eye sockets and a neat wound in one foot. In the left panel stand two uncrucified figures—witnesses, perhaps, patrons, executioners—one of them in a business suit, which could be Bacon himself, the other a blob in what might be black leather. The three panels, paradoxically in view of their content, are done in cheerful decorator colors, apart from the figures themselves: flat planes of pompeian red and cadmium orange, with black window panels. One cannot help thinking of Auden's great poem on art and suffering, as the old masters showed it: "how it takes place/while someone else is eating or opening a window or just/walking dully along." Auden went on, marvelously, "They never forgot that even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course/anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot/where the dogs go on with their doggy life."

How appropriate, one thinks, that the crucifixion should transpire in a tasteful salon, amidst the sort of *fin de siècle* color scheme Odette de Crécy would have favored when Swann at last found his way to her body. After all, the act of love, thrashing bodies and flashing teeth and animal hoots, also takes place in those ornamental spaces. (Bacon, who had some success as a decorator and designer of Art Deco furniture, also likes to paint coupled figures smeared against one another in damp intercourse.) Or one thinks of the crucifixion as a metaphor for terrible interrogations that took place behind shuttered windows on quiet boulevards that the screams couldn't reach. There is a certain insight in Nietzsche that it is not suffering so much as *meaningless* suffering to which the human mind is opposed, so that it was, in Nietzsche's view, the genius of Christianity to have made all suffering meaningful. Certainly, we stand before works like this—or the *Triptych Inspired by the Orestia of Aeschylus*—compelled, despite our will, to cover the brutalized bodies with a balm of interpretation, a redemptive coating of allegory, if only to comfort ourselves. So again one feels oneself to have been

manipulated in some way when the artist disowns any meaning whatever, and draws our attention, in his interviews, just to paint, almost as if he were some sort of Abstract Expressionist with no antecedent view of what he was going to do when he faced the canvas. Why is he then not an abstract painter—why choose these charged images only to elicit, as involuntarily as a scream, an interpretation he rejects, categorically, as beside the point? We cannot see gore as just so much scraped red pigment, cannot disinterpret a writhing limb as simply a marvelous wipe of white paint. And this stance is reinforced by the fact that we cannot succeed in giving meaning to a lot of what Bacon does in his portraits and figure studies, where the subjects are liable to distortions that ought to have an explanation in the world to which the figures belong but which will standardly be given an explanation from the world in which painting takes place—as something that happens not in meaningful spaces but on meaningless surfaces.

There is one absolutely marvelous painting in the show, worth anyone's time to see. This is *Study for Portrait of Van*

*Gogh III*, of 1957. It shows us what Bacon could have done had he given to the whole painting what he instead gives to isolated faces and figures. He shows Van Gogh as Van Gogh might have shown himself in a world that looks the way he represented it in paint—as if the world were made the way paintings are—trees of black paint squirming up out of fields of red paint, past fields of yellow paint and green paint. The artist stands on heavy feet, the kind that belong in his famous shoes, in a field of pink mud, casting blue shadows. He has a black all-purpose face; it could be the face of a horse as well as a human, or even of a fish. The face does not matter: It is the world according to Vincent, and we are seeing it from within. For its allusiveness, its power, its brilliance, its total engagement with its subject, it makes the rest of the show look like posters for some avant-garde guignol of yesterday. The portrait of Van Gogh is an homage, a celebration of the only values Bacon allows himself to mention, the values of painting as painting. It shows what his deflected talent is capable of when his heart is in his subject. □

#### HISTORY AS THE PAINTER BONNARD

Because nothing is ever finished  
the painter would shuffle, *bonnarding*,  
into galleries, museums, even the homes of his patrons,  
with hidden palette and brush:  
overscribble drapery and table with milk jug or fattened pear,  
the clabbered, ripening colors of second sight.

Though he knew with time the pentimenti rise—  
half-visible, half brine-swept fish, their plunged shapes  
pocking the mind—toward the end, only revision mattered:  
to look again, more deeply, harder, clearer,  
the one redemption granted us to ask.

This, we say, is what we meant to say. This. This.  
—as the kiss, the sorrowful murmur,  
may cover a child's bruises, if not retract the blow.  
While a woman in Prague asks softly, in good English,  
for the camera, "But who will give us back these twenty years?"

Ah love, o history, forgive  
the squandered light and flung-down rags of chances,  
old choices drifted terribly awry.  
And world, self-portrait never right, receive this gift—  
shuffling, spattered, stubborn,  
something nameless opens in the heart: to touch  
with soft-bent sable, ground-earth pigment, seed-clear oil,  
the rounding, bright-fleshed present, if not the past.

The kissed child puts his hand at last back into his mother's,  
though it is not the same;  
her fine face neither right nor wrong, only thoroughly his.

Jane Hirshfield

# LETTERS.

(Continued From Page 114)

taking the bait from the supposedly less sophisticated right. The Harvey Gantt campaign in North Carolina is a classic case in point. Your June 25 editorial ["Carolina Showdown"] remarks that Gantt put together a "coalition" that included "a few well-heeled bankers and business types who believe that Helms's troglodyte ways are inappropriate to the state's New South image."

Cave dwellers are not all racist reactionaries like Jesse Helms. They can be outwardly progressive, smiling, "New South" vintage, but deep down they want to keep things the way they have always been. In North Carolina that means keeping the union out, and retaining (troglodyte) right-to-work laws. Or as the union folks say, right-to-work-for-less. In other words, candidate Gantt may be liberal, black, a former mayor, pro-choice and pro-gay, but he is throwing to the state's "well-heeled" types a critical concession: He would keep the union out.

For years, "economic development" in North Carolina has been a code word used to draw runaway plants and industry from the North, with a sales pitch emphasizing a work environment virtually union-free and consequently one with no "labor problems." Right-to-work perpetuates that miserable subwage economy. To the state's workers, it is incidental if it is troglodyte Helms or New South Gantt. Either way, they are left out.

And any way you cut it, that means sacrificing North Carolina's notoriously low-wage earners, white and black, to the back-room deals of "progressive" politics. Helms may be a trog, but you can bet his handlers are smirking at this one, because they understand that a coalition means nothing when its weakest links are bartered off.

Russell W. Gibbons

Philip Murray Institute of Labor Studies

## GRAY IS BEAUTIFUL

Washington

It is a pleasure to accept your birthday toasts to Maggie Kuhn and the Gray Panthers. Your editorial "Gray Power" [May 28] has such sparkle for us that it glows as brightly as the eighty-five candles on Maggie's cake. This public praise gives us new energy to keep moving, age and youth in action, for the tough assignments on our agenda, the first of which is a national health system for the United States. What a remarkable action it would be if all readers of *The Nation* who believe we must have a national health system would urge—today—their senators and representatives on Capitol Hill to act promptly to institute one. We must be relentless in our advocacy if health care is to be recognized and provided as the right of every American!

Charlotte Flynn

Gray Panthers Project Fund

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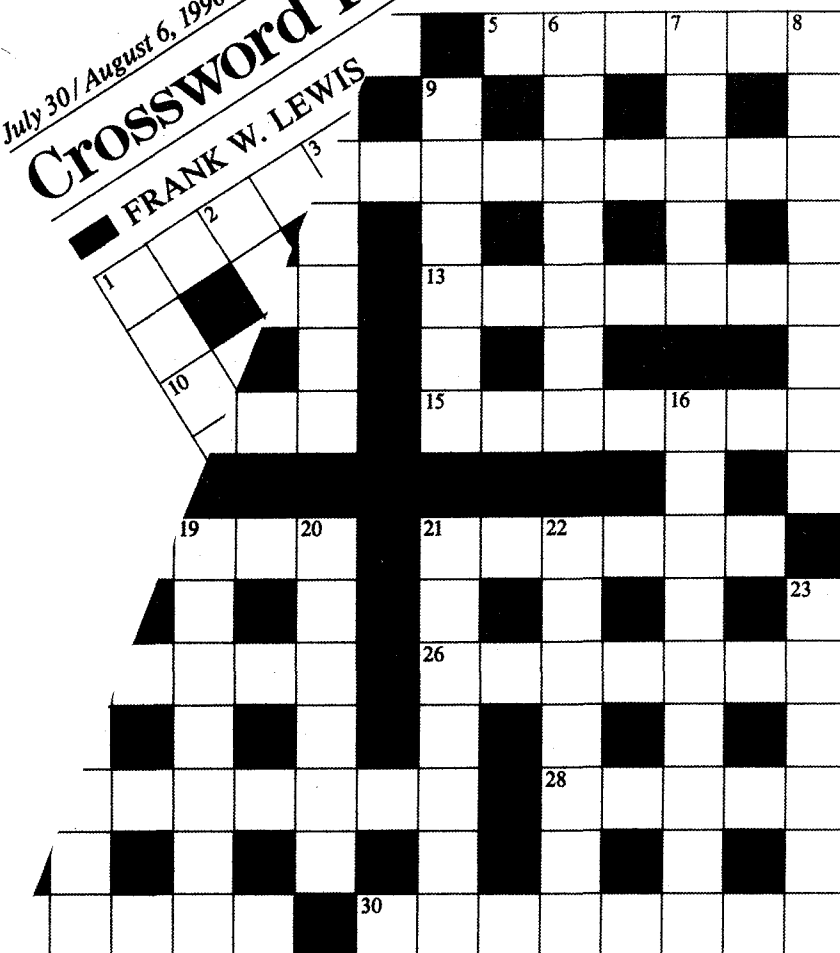
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## SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 2298

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| F | A | I | T | A | L | B | N |   |   |   |   |   |
| A | C | H | I | E | V | E | T | H | E | B | E | S |
| R | A | V | R | R | A | R | A |   |   |   |   |   |
| A | I | M | L | E | S | S | A | E | R | O | S | O |
| S |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | L |
| I | L | L | W | I | N | D | F | I | R | S | T | L |
| T | I | N | E | U | E | A | S |   |   |   |   |   |
| G | E | N | E | R | A | L | C | O | L | O | M | B |
| O | C | E | A | H | E | P | U |   |   |   |   |   |
| E | X | O | G | A | M | Y | S | T | A | T | I | O |
| S | L | C | E | I | S | N | D |   |   |   |   |   |
| A | N | C | H | O | R | S | A | W | E | I | G | H |

July 30 / August 6, 1990  
**Crossword Pu**  
 FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

- 5 Refuse a place of retirement? That's what a maid might do to make the rest available. (4,3,3)  
 6 Correct appellation for one of the things 4 might have pursued. (5)  
 7 Mozart's was from the 25 by another name. (9)  
 8 A fool with class takes time to relieve something. (7)  
 13 Less wind, less this it shows what the fraud perpetrators did! (7)  
 14 Hollow rocks of germanium taking poetic forms. (6)  
 15 Some students consider it a real bag of trouble. (7)  
 18 A United States variety of tree, lacking softness. (7)  
 21 See 3 down  
 24 This should offer a sound return. (7)  
 26 What do I do with this? I forget! (7)  
 27 A message in this contains lots of 3 and 21. (5,4)  
 28 See 8 down  
 29 One or two, for example, might be more insensitive. (6)  
 30 Such subjects demand special knowledge, with the possibility of a tie score. (8)

DOWN

- 1 The guardian of a 25 might wear one. (Top of the top of the city?) (6)  
 2 One signs up this way, but is "Regrets" the wrong word? (9)

- 3 and 21 across Little Dorothy, with George the writer, runs away with the ingredients of 27. (4,3,6)  
 4 They're not popular with Greenpeace, being once engaged in oil production. (Sounds like Marley's people!) (7)  
 6 Little George was caught doing it, long before computer types were. (7)  
 7 What Holmes required thee to do, with stately mansions. (5)  
 8 and 28 Play with your food, fairly late in the evening? (6,2,5)  
 9 Poetry comes to an end where Pretoria is though you'll find it in the Ukraine. (6)  
 16 Some consider it a cane substitute, and would have us be great producers of it. (4,5)  
 17 One's death is often staged. (8)  
 19 Certainly not a good-looker! (4,3)  
 20 Drink up! Gone with a couple of extra G's. (3-3)  
 21 Artists keep things here such as certain clothes. (7)  
 22 Head to foot, takes off the safety device where some hope to retire. (3,4)  
 23 Mother's spasm might be caused by resin. (6)  
 25 It jumps to a large number in a collection of females. (5)

SEE LAST WEEK'S  
 SOLUTION AT LEFT

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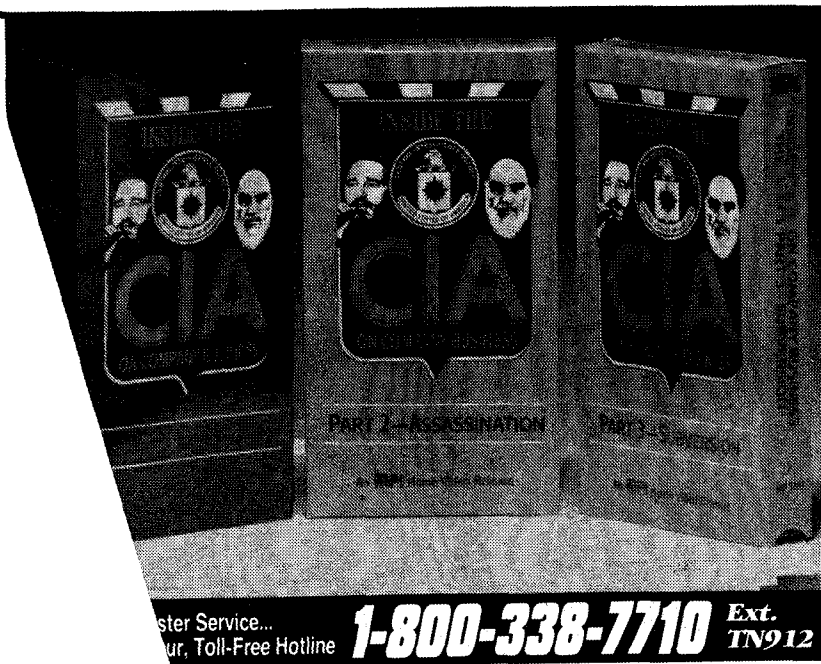
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